SUNDAY SCHOOL JOURNAL
for
TEACHERS
AND
YOUNG PEOPLE.

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The Revised Bible.

AFTER years of patient labor on the part of the revisers, and of patient waiting on the part of the Christian public, the Revised Bible is completed. The New Testament was issued in May, 1881, and in May of the present year the Old Testament was published. Long before this meets the eye of our readers they will doubtless have seen the completed volume and will have judged for themselves.

Whether or not this will take the place of the grand old book endeared to us all by the holiest ties is a question no man can answer. Those who think the old cannot be displaced by it will do well to be reminded that when it was a new version in 1611 there were many who declared it could never supplant the one to which they had been accustomed. Yet before many years it had taken the lead of all the English versions, and the old Geneva Bible, which was its strongest competitor, passed out of sight, the last edition being issued in 1644.

We make no prediction one way or the other. The book is before the Church. Its merits and demerits will be weighed, and judgment pronounced; and even if it should never displace the version of which it is a revision it will be a very great help to a correct understanding of the word of God. Whatever criticisms scholars may pass on some of its renderings, there are unquestionably many changes made by it which all must acknowledge to be improvements.

The assistance rendered by American scholars in this revision entitles them to the profound respect of their countrymen. An examination of the changes suggested by them, but not finally allowed, shows that they were independent and aggressive, not bound by old usage or fettered by use of obsolete words and forms of speech.

The arrangement of the text into paragraphs, according to its meaning, and of the poetical parts into metrical lines are very great improvements over the former version. To some unaccustomed eyes it may have an awkward look, but the appearance will soon become familiar, and the new arrangement will add to facility of interpretation, and become a source of satisfaction to the reader. Coming generations will doubtless wonder how their forefathers managed to read the book all broken up in disconnected verses and prose and poetry mingled indiscriminately.

Every student of the Bible ought to have a copy of this Revised Version.

Sirius at the Heels of the Sun.

Dog days? That means the time of the year when Sirius, the dog-star, rises and sets with the sun. The season has now arrived, and Sirius like a dog follows Apollo. "Evil communications corrupt good manners." It would seem as if the sun had fallen into bad company, and Apollo now followed the dog. A sticky mist swathes the seacoast, through which the sun winks with a very red eye, as if out at a late bacchanal with Sirius. The air is dead and enervating in the very morning. By eleven the sun may have succeeded in "burning off" the mist, and then what a dry, hot, parched day we may perspire through! May the sun soon shake off the evil companion at his heels!

The thing to be seriously feared is lest Sirius shoot an evil ray into the Church itself. Sanctuary doors may be shut, Sunday-schools discontinued, and "drought" prevail during the week, all services being discontinued. Do not favor what may be ill-advised, but whenever possible keep up August activities. Let it not seem on Sunday as if Sirius, belonging to a race that likes a ramble in the fields, had gone into the country, and Apollo had

gone after him. Above all, let not the dog-star affect our closet of prayer, and the private spiritual life. Let us live above "the drought," and may ours be the fields wet with the dews of heaven!

Those Life-Saving Jackets.

THERE in the boat-room of the life-saving station is a surf-boat. What a strong, stalwart servant! Heavy and yet buoyant, for there are air-chambers in stern and bow. It is ready for service at a moment's notice. The ax and hatchet in the boat say, "Ready." The long steering oar says, "Ready." And those little fabrics of cork and canvas, one at each seat of the oarsmen, say, "Ready." At a moment's notice that boat must be pulled through the white, roaring surf. But before they start each of those surfmen must put on the jackets of cork and canvas now lying on his vacant seat. Rash to venture out to help another when you don't know whether or not you can help yourself. Put on those jackets!

Teacher, your life is a venture out to save somebody else. Trying to save others, have you first made a surrender of self to Christ, knowing nothing but Christ and him crucified? You need not haul your boat ashore, forsaking your work, but where you are, ask that you may be blessed in your own soul first. Put on the life-jackets!

The Flock Left Behind.

THERE is something of a flock left behind in town and city when the August hegira may take place. Do not forget them. A wee little lamb whose face is whitening for the folds of heaven will be thankful for a prayer at its bedside in a home on some shaded, narrow street. There may be a "silly old sheep" off in a by-path of an ugly habit that will be thankful for the word and the hand of reclamation. And then be assured that the good Shepherd has not gone, but waits to meet you in the sick-room of his "wee little lamb," or off in the path of temptation from which you would rescue that "silly old sheep." On town and city is still the shadow of his crook.

"Grace for Grace." John 1. 16.

BY JOSEPHINE POLLARD.

IN order to obtain the best results from the "Mind Cure," the "Faith Cure," or any of the other cures now so extensively advertised, it is necessary that the patient have faith in the remedy. At first view it appears as if the advantages were all on one side, and that the idea of getting something for nothing was in itself a sufficient inducement for the sick and afflicted to resort to these healing agencies. But such is not the case. There was no particular virtue in the Pool of Bethesda. The people were not very cleanly in their habits, and doubtless derived much benefit from an all-over bath, which many would not have taken but for their faith in a supernatural medication of the waters.

Jesus saw the impotent man lying near the porch and waiting for some one to bear him down to the pool, and said unto him, "Wilt thou be made whole? Rise, take up thy bed, and walk."

This was a strange request to make of a perfectly helpless creature, who for nearly forty years had been in this infirm condition, and required the exercise of great faith-power. The man evidently wanted to get well. He recognized in Jesus a mind superior to his own, and this fact made him instinctively obey the command, "Rise, walk." Jesus might have taken him by the hand, or lifted him up bodily without asking the man to make any voluntary effort. But that was not his method. "He that seeketh findeth; and to him that knocketh it shall be opened." Faith does wonders in the way of expediting recovery, but cannot safely be relied upon to cure all diseases. Hope sustains us and enables to bear up under our infirmities, but if it would heal a diseased limb, straighten a crooked back, or remove rheumatism, there would be less need of hospitals, and fewer cripples walking the streets to-day.

Faith has its limitations, and its failures. Not all our prayers are answered, yet the very exercise of prayer is medicine to the soul, and puts us in such a condition of spiritual health that we are the better able to bear our bodily infirmities or our temporal trials.

The heart of our hope lies in yearning in our weakness for divine support. We reach out for something that will sustain us when all else fails. The drowning man catches at a straw, and the diseased man tries every new remedy that is brought to his notice; reads the patent-medicine testimonials, every one of which he strictly believes, tests one by one the various preparations that are warranted to meet his case, and rejoices in a temporary relief from the ills that afflict him. In almost every instance the virtue of the medicine depends on the faith of the patient. If he loses heart the medicine ceases to do good; and in every condition of life, whether it be sanitary, social, spiritual, or financial, we find that the gain is largely, if not altogether, dependent on the investment: grace for grace.

If we take proper precautions we usually escape epidemics, and keep ourselves and our households in comparatively good health; but to expect immunity from disease when all the laws of health have been violated, and when invitations have been sent out to "the pestilence that walketh in darkness," is to expect a miracle.

As in our natural diseases, so in our spiritual diseases; healing comes through an act of faith. In our social relations, if we want to have friends we must show ourselves friendly. We have no right to expect love as our royal prerogative. The ancient Greeks and Romans were willing to perform herculean tasks in order to win the favor of the gods, while many in these days expect to secure all the

blessings in the calender, and heaven besides, without making the least effort. Salvation's free—so is water, and fresh air; but it is possible for a man to die of thirst at the brink of a well, or to be asphyxiated when there is only a pane of glass between him and the purest oxygen.

More grace in the using of our gifts will insure a more gracious reward. Grace of speech, grace of manner, grace of workmanship, is not lost upon the world. It is not the word that is said, but the way it is said, that wounds or comforts us. It is not the deed itself, but the gracious manner in which it is done, that confers the benefit.

The Bible in the Sunday-School.

BY REV. S. TOWNSEND.

I see quite a number of communications recently in the JOURNAL and elsewhere expressing sorrow that the Bible is so little used in the Sunday-schools of the present day, and intimating very strongly that the present system of lessons has a tendency to weaken the interest for the Scriptures in the schools.

I do not know what may be the tendency in certain localities, but having been in the ministry forty-six years, mostly in rural towns and villages of New Jersey, I can cheerfully and truthfully say that so far as my observation goes the present is far the best system of lessons that has ever been gotten up, and that the young people of our Sunday-schools are seeing more beauty in the Holy Scriptures than ever before.

Thirty or forty years ago the lesson system—or rather want of system—in many schools, was like this: go into a school and ask Teacher No. 1, "What chapter are you studying to-day?" He would reply, "We have taken up the first chapter in the Bible; we want to know more about the beginning of things!" Ask Teacher No. 2, "What are you studying?" "We are reading the first chapter of Job; it seems to be a chapter of adventures and disasters, and I thought it would please the boys?" Ask Teacher No. 3, "And what are you studying?" "We are studying the twenty-third Psalm. I always loved it so much!" These things were so to my certain knowledge; each teacher chose his own chapter—hence there would be six to eight chapters used in the same school, and in many cases not a single question asked on one of them.

Now the attention of the whole school, and indeed of the whole Christian world, is concentrated on one lesson, and all possible light on that theme is given by very competent men who have made these things a life-time study. Instead, therefore, of doubting or complaining, I think that the whole Church ought heartily to thank God that such a system has been brought out.

Of course, like every other good thing, it needs careful working. Let every superintendent insist that the Golden Texts and memory verses be recited by the school with their books closed, and make it a point that these be committed to memory every week. Also that the review questions be answered from memory. This will soon insure greater attention and greater improvement

Opening and Closing Services for Third Quarter of 1885.

OPENING SERVICE.

I. SILENCE.

II. THE DOXOLOGY.

III. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. Give ear, O my people, to my law: incline your ears to the words of my mouth. Psa. 78. 1.

SCHOOL. My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distill as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass. Deut. 32. 2.

SUPT. For this commandment which I command thee this day, it is not hidden from thee, neither is it far off. But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. Deut. 30. 11, 14.

SCHOOL. Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law. Psa. 119. 18.

SUPT. Search the Scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me. John 5. 39.

SCHOOL. But these are written, that ye may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name. John 20. 31.

IV. SINGING.

V. PRAYER.

LESSON SERVICE.

I. CLASS STUDY OF THE LESSON.

II. SINGING LESSON HYMN.

III. RECITATION OF THE TITLE, GOLDEN TEXT, OUTLINE, AND DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION, by the school in concert.

IV. REVIEW and APPLICATION OF THE LESSON, by Pastor or Superintendent.

V. THE SUPPLEMENTAL LESSON.*

VI. ANNOUNCEMENTS (especially of the Church service and week-evening prayer-meeting).

CLOSING SERVICE.

I. SINGING.

II. RESPONSIVE SENTENCES.

SUPT. Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man. Eccl. 12. 13.

SCHOOL. Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things. Phil. 4. 8.

III. DISMISSION.

THE APOSTLES' CREED.

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord: who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate; was crucified, dead, and buried; the third day he rose from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the Holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. *Amen.*

* Special Lessons in the Church Catechism may here be introduced.

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE LESSONS.

THIRD QUARTER: THREE MONTHS' STUDIES IN THE KINGS.

B. C. 907.] **LESSON V. ELIJAH MEETING AHAB.** [Aug. 2.

1 Kings 18. 1-18. [*Commit to memory verses* 15-18.]

1 And it came to pass *after* many days, that the word of the LORD came to E-li'jah in the third year, saying, Go, show thyself unto A'hab, and I will send rain upon the earth.

2 And E-li'jah went to show himself unto A'hab. And *there was* a sore famine in Sa-ma'ri-a.

3 And A'hab called O'ba-di'ah, which *was* the governor of *his* house. (Now O'ba-di'ah feared the LORD greatly:

4 For it was *so*, when Jez'e-bel cut off the prophets of the LORD, that O'ba-di'ah took a hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water.)

5 And A'hab said unto O'ba-di'ah, Go into the land, unto all fountains of water, and unto all brooks; peradventure we may find grass to save the horses and mules alive, that we lose not all the beasts.

6 So they divided the land between them, to pass throughout it: A'hab went one way by himself, and O'ba-di'ah went another way by himself.

7 And as O'ba-di'ah was in the way, behold, E-li'jah met him: and he knew him, and fell on his face, and said, *Art* thou that my lord E-li'jah?

8 And he answered him, I *am:* go, tell thy lord, Behold, E-li'jah *is here.*

9 And he said, What have I sinned, that thou wouldest deliver thy servant into the hand of A'hab, to slay me?

10 *As* the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, *He is* not *there;* he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not.

11 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, E-li'jah *is here.*

12 And it shall come to pass, *as soon as* I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not; and *so* when I come and tell A'hab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.

13 Was it not told my lord what I did when Jez'e-bel slew the prophets of the LORD, how I hid a hundred men of the LORD'S prophets by fifty in a cave, and fed them with bread and water?

14 And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, E-li'jah *is here;* and he shall slay me.

15 And E-li'jah said, *As* the LORD of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him to-day.

16 So O'ba-di'ah went to meet A'hab, and told him: and A'hab went to meet E-li'jah.

17 And it came to pass, when A'hab saw E-li'jah, that A'hab said unto him, *Art* thou he that troubleth Is'ra-el?

18 And he answered, I have not troubled Is'ra-el; but thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the LORD, and thou hast followed Ba'al-im.

General Statement.

While Elijah was awaiting God's summons in the quiet of the widow's cottage at Zarephath, the land of Israel was desolated at once by drought, by famine, and by persecution. For three years the heavens were unspotted by cloud, and the earth unmoistened by rain. The harvests failed, and the people, hungry and thirsty, clamored for bread and water. Ahab sent far and wide searching for the prophet who had laid the ban upon the land, that he might compel him to lift it. Queen Jezebel vented her rage upon the worshipers of God, and not only destroyed the altars, but slew the prophets. One heart in the palace beat true to God. Obadiah, the prime minister, next to the king himself in power, held in secret to the old faith, and used his influence to protect the hunted prophets. Hidden in caves, they were fed by his bounty, and preserved to keep alive God's truth until brighter days. One day as Obadiah is searching for water among the foot-hills of Mount Carmel, he sees a strange form approaching, which at once he recognizes as the prophet Elijah. Reverently he bows before the messenger of the Most High, and hears his command to announce his coming to King Ahab. But his faith is weak, and he fears the wrath of the king, not perceiving that God's servant has a mighty protector. Re-assured by Elijah's promise, he bears the message. Ahab meets the prophet with a taunt, which is flung back in his face by the fearless Tishbite.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. The word of the Lord. Probably by a certain impression on the mind of Elijah, which he recognized as divine. **In the third year.** In Jas. 5. 17, the drought is said to have lasted "three years and six months." Hence "the third year" may refer to the prophet's stay in Zarephath. **Show thyself unto Ahab.** He was sent to remove the curse from the land, and to give Ahab another opportunity of repentance. **I will send rain.** The rain would thus come as God's gift, not Baal's.

2. Elijah went. Again we note the promptness of his obedience when God called to a dangerous mission. (1) *May we be as ready to hear God's voice and to respond to his call!* **To show himself.** A perilous meeting, for the king was enraged by his failure to find him and by his powerlessness to lift the ban from the land. **Ahab.** The wickedest of all the kings, not from taste for evil, but because of his weakness under the dominant will of his queen. (2) *A weak nature may do more harm than a wicked one.* **A sore famine.** No rain for three years would cause great dearth of food, and there were no railroads to transport provisions from other lands, and no friendship between states leading to mutual assistance. Even in our time thirty-five million people died from starvation in one famine in China. **Samaria.** The capital of the ten tribes, situated thirty miles north of Jerusalem. It is now a small village, called *Sebustiyeh.*

3. Ahab called Obadiah. Strange that such a king should have such a prime-minister; but even wicked rulers like to have conscientious subordinates. Obadiah's name states his character. It means "servant of Jehovah." **The governor of his house.** Mayor of the palace; in position next to the king, and his chief executive officer. **Feared the Lord greatly.** In the most depraved period of Israel's history; in the very center of corruption, the court; under all the cares of the kingdom, amid all the distractions of society and public life, we find this man a worshiper of God and loyal to his religion. (3) *He who wills can serve God in any sphere and station of life.*

4. When Jezebel cut off. This was the first persecution in the history of God's people, and we have but a hint of its horrors. Its martyrs are unknown, but every one of their names is written in heaven. **The prophets of the Lord.** Not all these were inspired. They were mostly "prophet scholars," men receiving instruction in spiritual religion, and devoted to God's service, from whom God raised up a few inspired prophets. **Obadiah took a hundred.** He might have lived secure in the palace, and held himself aloof from the unpopular cause, but he chose to make the burden of God's people his own, and to risk his own safety by providing for the endangered prophets. (4) *The true servant of God will feel for his fellow-men, and seek to relieve them.* **Fifty in a cave.** The vast caverns in the mountains of Palestine have in every age furnished retreats for robbers and political offenders, and sometimes for persecuted saints. **Bread and water.** Words used of food in general. Though Orientals can live on far less food than Anglo-Saxons, yet the support of a hundred men must have been of considerable expense to Obadiah.

5. Ahab said unto Obadiah. He knew that among his courtiers there was no one on whose fidelity he could depend so safely as the worshiper of God. **Unto all fountains of water.** The places where fountains and brooks had been before the drought. Often by digging

below the surface at such places water can be obtained. **Save the horses and mules.** Selfish to the last, his first thought is of his own surroundings. He cares more to preserve his royal stud than the lives of his people. So William the conqueror drove thousands of people from their farms that he might plant the New Forest as a hunting park.

6. They divided the land. It was a great strait for Israel, when the king goes forth in person to inspect the land for water. **Ahab went one way.** He could not trust his Baal-worshiping servants, who might steal the water for themselves. **By himself.** But probably each was accompanied by a retinue appropriate to his state. Palestine is a small country, and it would not require much time to make the search.

7. As Obadiah was in the way. He was in the way of duty and of service, in helping God's people and in fulfilling the tasks of his office, when he met God's messenger. (5) *People who find blessings generally meet them in the path of duty.* **He knew him.** Either from description or from an earlier acquaintance, which suggests that there had been some concert of plan in the past among the followers of God. **Fell on his face.** Showing reverence for one who was recognized as God's messenger, and whose prediction of the long drought had been verified. **My lord Elijah.** He speaks to him as to a king; and truly, skin-clad though he was, he was far more a king than Ahab. (6) *The child of God, whose prayer calls down omnipotence, is mightier than a monarch.*

8. Go tell thy lord. He transfers the title to Ahab, "He is thy lord, not I." **Elijah is here.** It was necessary that he should appear before removing the curse from the land, in order to show that it was by his word, and not from Baal.

9. What have I sinned. We notice in Obadiah the signs of a weak faith. He had lived too near the world not to feel somewhat of its influence upon his trust in God. **Thou wouldest deliver thy servant.** For him to tell Ahab that Elijah was near might awaken the suspicion that he had kept him in concealment.

10, 11. There is no nation. That is, of the lands around Samaria, and in friendly relation with King Ahab. **Sent to seek thee.** Perhaps not to kill Elijah, but to compel him to release the land from the drought. **He took an oath.** Not content with a mere statement, he exacted a formal, sworn statement. **And now thou sayest.** It was a bold act to go into the presence of the king with such a message, especially if it came through one who was suspected of friendship with Elijah.

12. The Spirit of the Lord shall carry. Such sudden transportations of men from place to place are hinted at in Scripture (Ezek. 3. 12, 14; Acts 8. 39), and may have taken place in Elijah's history, which throughout has such a supernatural element that some of the ancient rabbins believed he was not a man, but an angel. **Fear the Lord from my youth.** Here was the secret of Obadiah's character. A pious Israelite mother had trained him in early childhood, and the impressions of that tender age had ripened with his growth. (7) *Youth is the time to bring souls to Christ.*

13, 14. Was it not told my lord. He mentions this, not in a boasting spirit, but to show the sincerity of his service; and as a plea that his life might not be endangered. **He shall slay me.** Obadiah might have trusted God more fully, but few would have been as faithful in his place.

15. The Lord God of hosts. The word "hosts" means *armies*, and refers to the universe, whose parts form one vast army under God's command. **Before whom I stand.** Standing before God means in worship and in service. **I will surely show.** Thus relieving the prime-minister of his fear, and preparing Ahab for the meeting.

16. Obadiah went. When assured that it was the way of duty, he resisted his fears and went to bear the messeage. There is often more courage in victory over fear than in unconsciousness of it. **Ahab went to meet Elijah.** With mingled alarm and gladness; hoping to relieve the land, and perhaps to slay the prophet.

17. Art thou he that troubleth Israel. He blames Elijah for the drought, because he had not only predicted it, but declared that it should end only at his word. Yet he spoke only as the messenger of God, and not in his own name. (8) *How easy it is for a guilty conscience to shift the responsibility for crime!*

18. I have not troubled Israel. The true cause lay back of Elijah's curse, in the sins that brought it; and for these sins, not Elijah, but Ahab, is responsible. **Thou and thy father's house.** Ahab had led the people into idolatry, and was accountable to God for the misuse of his influence. **Thy father's house** refers to the house of Omri, which surpassed not only its predecessors on the throne, but its successors also, in open disobedience to God. **Forsaken the commandments.** A bold, but well-deserved rebuke. **Followed Baalim.** Idols which were even more debasing in their influence than the worship of the golden calves.

HOME READINGS.

M. Elijah meeting Ahab. 1 Kings 18. 1–18.
Tu. The blessings of obedience. Deut. 28. 1–14.
W. Famine in Israel. 2 Sam. 21. 1–9.
Th. Elijah a type of John the Baptist. Matt. 3. 1–12.
F. Seeking for vengeance. 1 Sam. 19. 8–24.
S. Cautioned to fear not. Luke 12. 31–40.
S. Wickedness of forsaking God. Jer. 2. 1–13.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim. 1 Kings 18. 18.

LESSON HYMN. S. M.

Hymnal, No. 314.

God's holy law transgressed,
Speaks nothing but despair;
Convinced of guilt, with grief oppressed,
We find no comfort there.

Not all our groans and tears,
Nor works which we have done,
Nor vows, nor promises, nor prayers,
Can e'er for sin atone.

Relief alone is found
In Jesus' precious blood:
'Tis this that heals the mortal wound,
And reconciles to God.

TIME.—B. C. 907.

PLACE.—In Israel, the precise locality unknown.

RULERS.—See Lesson IV.

CONNECTING LINKS.—While Elijah was at Zarephath, the widow's son suddenly died, but was restored to life through the prophet's prayer. Read 1 Kings 17. 17-24.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION—The trouble of sin.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. Ahab and Obadiah, v. 1–6.
What command of God came to Elijah, and when?
What was God's promise?
What was the condition of things in Samaria?
Whom did Ahab call to his assistance?
What was the character of Obadiah?
What good thing had he done?
What did Ahab propose?

2. Obadiah and Elijah, v. 7–16.
Whom did Obadiah meet?
What did Elijah say to him?
Of what was Obadiah afraid?
How did he prove his righteousness?
How did Elijah re-assure him?

3. Elijah and Ahab, v. 17, 18.
How did the king greet Elijah?
What was the prophet's answer?
How did Elijah show that Ahab was responsible?

Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. That the fear of the Lord is wiser than the fear of man?
2. That it is safe to serve the Lord?
3. That forsaking the commandments of God brings trouble?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. Ahab and Obadiah, v. 1–6.
What divine command did Elijah receive?
What blessing was promised?
What had befallen Samaria?
Who was governor of the royal house?
What was his character?
How had he shown his godly fear?
Where was Obadiah commanded to go?
For what purpose?
Who helped in the search for water?

2. Obadiah and Elijah, v. 7–16.
Whom did Obadiah meet?
How did he greet the prophet?
What message was given him?
Why did Obadiah fear to deliver the message?
By what act had he angered Ahab?
What assurance did Elijah offer?
What effect had the message upon Ahab?

3. Elijah and Ahab, v. 17, 18.
How did the king greet the prophet?
Who was the real troubler of Israel?
What had been his offense?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That good men sometimes shrink from duty through fear?
2. That good men will care for God's distressed servants?
3. That a people's true enemies are its wicked men?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

Who was Obadiah? **A worshiper of God and Ahab's chief ruler.**
What had he done which proved he loved God? **He had hidden one hundred of God's prophets in two caves and fed them.**
What did King Ahab say to him one day? **"Let us go through all the land."**
What for? **"To see if we can find some grass for our horses and mules, so they may not die."**
What plan did they make? **They divided the land between them, Ahab going one way, and Obadiah the other.**
What did God tell Elijah at the same time? **"Go, show yourself to Ahab, and I will send rain upon the earth."**
As Elijah went on his way to see Ahab, whom did he meet? **Obadiah.**
How did Obadiah greet him? **He fell on his face and said; "Are not you my lord Elijah?"**
What did Elijah answer? **"Yes, I am Elijah; go and tell King Ahab, 'Elijah is here.'"**
What was Obadiah afraid of? **That when he went to tell Ahab, Elijah would disappear, and then he would be killed.**
Where did he say Ahab had hunted for him? **Far and near, and made the kings swear he was not hidden in their land.**
What did Elijah say? **"As surely as God liveth I will show myself to Ahab to-day."**
What did Ahab do when Obadiah told him that Elijah was coming? **Very angrily went to meet him.**
What did he say? **"Are you the one who is making all this trouble in Israel?"**
What was Elijah's bold answer? **"No; not I, but you and your father's family."** [Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.]

Words with Little People.

Sometimes when *we* have done wrong we like to *get out* of it, and lay it to some one else. That was just what wicked King Ahab did in our lesson to-day, and I am sure we do not want to imitate that bad man in any thing. So let us, instead, every time we do wrong, confess our sins. If we do, "God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness."

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. In what year of the drought did the Lord tell Elijah to show himself to Ahab? **"In the third year."**

2. What did Obadiah do when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord? **Hid a hundred in a cave.**

3. In order to save the horses and the mules, what did Ahab propose to Obadiah to do? **To search the land for grass.**

4. While doing this, what happened to Obadiah in the way? **"Elijah met him."**

5. What did Elijah say Ahab and his house had done? **"Forsaken the commandments of the Lord."**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

A Good Man in a Strange Place.

I. HIS PLACE.
The governor of his [Ahab's] *house.* v. 3.
"Not many mighty, not many noble." 1 Cor. 1. 26.
"Hid....from the wise and prudent." Matt. 11. 25.

II. HIS GODLINESS.
Obadiah feared the Lord greatly. v. 3.
"Fear of the Lord....beginning of wisdom." Psa. 111. 10.
"Fear God, and keep his commandments." Eccl. 12. 10.

III. HIS INTEREST IN GOD'S CAUSE.
Took a hundred prophets. v. 4.
"Receiveth a prophet....prophet's reward." Matt. 10. 41.
"Love the brotherhood." 1 Pet. 2. 17.

IV. HIS GENEROSITY.
Fed them with bread and water. v. 4.
"Whosoever shall give to drink." Matt. 10. 42.
"Ministered to the saints." Heb. 6. 10.

V. HIS TRUSTWORTHINESS.
Ahab said, Go into all the land. v. 5.
"Diligent....stand before kings." Prov. 22. 29.
"Diligent shall bear rule." Prov. 12. 24.

VI. HIS EARLY PIETY.
I.. .fear the Lord from my youth. v. 12.
"From a child....known the Holy Scriptures." 2 Tim. 3. 15.
"Train up a child," Prov. 22. 6.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

Four Classes of Character.

1. *Obadiah.* If in any place on earth it would seem impossible to serve God, it would be beside the throne of Ahab. Yet just at that spot we find a man who "feared God greatly." Let none deem that *their* circumstances forbid them being faithful Christians.

2. *The Prophets of the Lord.* While one of God's servants rises to high honor, others who are just as faithful are persecuted and slain. Is God unjust? No, he allots to each follower that place where he can best honor God, gain good, and do good. And if one gets safely to heaven, what matter whether it be from palace couch or martyr's scaffold.

3. *Elijah.* It has ever been the fate of God's people to be considered "troublers." Christ troubled Jerusalem (Matt. 2. 3), and the apostles "turned the world upside down." Whoever arouses men from the quiet of sin must expect to be accused as a disturber.

4. *Ahab.* The man whose conscience is beginning to trouble him is very apt to accuse others of wrong-doing. Ahab was wrestling with a feeling that *he* was wrong, and therefore he attacked Elijah.

An English Teacher's Notes on the Lessons.

BY SARAH GERALDINA STOCK.

When any great disaster occurs the question immediately is: Whose fault is it? Who was responsible? Sometimes the blame is all laid on one individual, but oftener we find that many were implicated in the cause of the disaster, and that the fault must be brought home to many. It is the same with every general condition of trouble and difficulty. The cause may be traced to one person, but there will often be more than one concerned in it. Suppose the case of a family where there is constant quarreling, discord, and discomfort. All this may arise seemingly from one person, and yet one person can hardly be responsible for the whole. The right remedy for such a state of things is for each one to ask himself: Is it my fault? Am I in any way the cause of the trouble?

The question, Whose fault is it? comes up in the lesson for to-day, and the teacher will do well to make it the central point. We read of the meeting of two well-known persons, Ahab, king of Israel, and Elijah, the prophet. Each of these has fault to find with the other. Which was right?

Notice first how they came to meet. We found in the last lesson that Elijah was obliged to hide from Ahab, and that he concealed himself first in a lonely spot on the farther side of Jordan, and afterward in the house of a poor widow in a neighboring country. To-day, on the contrary, he goes especially to meet Ahab. Why such a change in his course? He is acting in accordance with the rule of his life. The command of God has come to him (ver. 1), and he does according to the word of the Lord.

But Ahab is on his travels also; not, it is true, in search of Elijah—for he seems to have given that up—but of grass for his "horses and mules." What a picture we get here of the state of the country! Animals dying for want of pasture, and every little bit that can be discovered so precious that the king dare not trust his servants to search for it lest it might never reach him—only the one man among them who fears God is to be depended on for this service. A graphic description of such a drought is given in Jer. 14, "little ones" (rather servants) going to the wells and returning downcast with empty vessels—the ground dry and hard, the "plowmen" in despair, the animals piteously seeking, but in vain, for relief. Another short but telling picture of famine is given in Hab. 3. 17. The failure of food we have already seen in the last lesson as extending even across the border into the territory of Zidon. To some extent, then, we can imagine the trouble of the people of Israel.

And who is the cause of it all? Elijah had predicted the drought; had he any thing to do with it? We learn from Jas. 5. 17, that he had. For this he had earnestly prayed, and God had sent it in answer to his prayer. Does it not look as though Ahab were correct in designating Elijah "he that troubleth Israel?"

But go back a little, and see if there is nothing else in the passage which reveals the state of the country. There is a little episode told us by the way in the life of Obadiah. He had hid one hundred men, in two companies, in a cave, and there supplied them with food. Were they then malefactors—rebels? No, prophets of Jehovah; and only thus were they saved from death at the command of the cruel and idolatrous queen. Ahab's predecessors had cast off the true worship of Jehovah, but he himself had gone further, and not only introduced idol worship, but allowed the persecution of those who resisted it. Here is a still darker picture than our former one. See how it is drawn by Elijah himself but a few days later. Chap. 19. 14. This was the true cause of the drought. Elijah had prayed for the fulfillment of God's word spoken by Moses (Lev. 26. 19, 20), and the word had been fulfilled. But who caused this trouble? Was not Elijah right when he answered the king; "I have not troubled Israel; but thou, and thy father's house?"

The house of Omri were the cause of all this misery that had come upon Israel. Omri was not responsible; his family were responsible; his son Ahab was responsible. The fault lay with several persons and was chargeable upon each. Ahab, who tried to shift it upon Elijah, had his full share of the guilt.

There was a way out of this trouble. See 2 Chron. 7. 13, 14. But first it was needful that the fault should be recognized. Trouble in the class, trouble in the school, trouble (not sorrow) in the family, trouble in the nation, is sure to have its root in sin. And sin is not a vague thing, traceable to no one in particular. If the laws of Jehovah are broken, some one has broken them; some one is guilty of the sin, and responsible for the trouble.

When trouble is abroad, each one should ask himself, Is it my fault? A. is so cross, says B., that is why things go wrong. But who irritates A. and provokes her beyond endurance? Possibly B. herself. C. gets drunk, says D., that is why his family are starving. Did D. never set the example of taking strong drink? There is so much selfishness every-where, says E.; every one looking out for himself. What is E. looking out for? Is he remembering others?

All will be ready, after reading to-day's lesson, to blame Ahab, the "troubler of Israel." But let it be plainly shown that each person who forsakes the commandments of God, and follows his own way instead, must certainly be a troubler of others.

Bible Reading Lesson Analysis.

BY JOHN WILLIAMSON, M.D., D.D.

Elijah Meeting Ahab. 1 Kings 18. 1-18.

(*a*) *Ahab, the faithless king.*

1. Would not rule as God had bidden kings to do. He "did evil in the sight of the Lord above all that were before him." Deut. 17. 17-20; 2 Sam. 23. 3; Exod. 18. 21; 1 Kings 2. 3.

2. Married against the law of God. "He took to wife Jezebel, the daughter of Ethbaal, king of the Zidonians." Gen. 2. 18, 24; 24. 29; Exod. 34. 15, 16; Deut. 7. 1-3; Josh. 23. 11-13; 1 Cor. 7. 39.

3. Ran into temptation, and yielded to it. "But there was none like unto Ahab, which did sell himself to work wickedness in the sight of the Lord, whom Jezebel his wife stirred up." 1 Kings 21. 25; Num. 22. 15–17; Luke 8. 13; James 1. 2–4, 12.

4. Became grossly idolatrous. "And went and served Baal, and worshiped him." Exod. 20. 2, 3; Deut. 30. 16, 17; 2 Kings 17. 35; Josh. 24. 23; 1 Sam. 7. 3.

5. Attributed the misfortune of Israel, not to his own sin, and the sin of his subjects, but to a prophet's enmity. "As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee." "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Prov. 15. 9; Jer. 44. 4, 11; Dan. 9. 7, 8; Isa. 3. 8; Ezek. 28 7–10.

6. Knew, but cared not, that godliness insures national thrift. Because "ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." Prov. 14. 34; 16. 12; 25. 5; 1 Kings 22. 43, 44; 2 Kings 18. 3, 7.

(*b*) *Obadiah, the faithful governor of Ahab's household.*

1. Was true to God when such fidelity was extremely perilous. "When Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord....Obadiah took an hundred prophets, and hid them by fifty in a cave." 1 Sam. 15. 22; 2 Chron. 31. 11, 13; 34. 12; Dan. 6; Num. 12. 7, 8, with Heb. 3. 2, 5.

2. Was secularly rewarded providentially for his fidelity. "So they divided the land between them, to pass throughout it: Ahab went one way by himself, and Obadiah went another way by himself." Gen. 39. 21; Psa. 5. 12; Job 36. 7; Isa. 33. 15, 16; Prov. 11. 8; 13. 25; 28. 1.

3. Did his duty, and left the consequences with God. "So Obadiah went to meet Ahab, and told him." Deut. 10. 12; Josh. 22. 5; Eccl. 12. 13; Micah 6. 8; Zech. 7. 9; 8. 16.

4. Was wisely cautious. "When I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me." Prov. 2. 11; 8. 12; Amos 5. 12, 13; Num. 14. 40–45; Job 22. 29.

5. Began to serve God in his youth. "I, thy servant, fear the Lord from my youth." Prov. 1. 8; Eccl. 12. 1; 1 Sam. 1. 26–28; 3; 25. 1; Luke 2. 46; Psa. 148. 12, 13.

6. Was profoundly religious. "Now Obadiah feared the Lord greatly." Prov. 2. 3–5; 8. 13; Deut. 13. 4; Eccl. 12. 13; Mal. 3. 16; Josh. 4. 24.

7. Boldly did his duty when it was made known. Prov. 28. 1; Isa. 50. 7; Acts 5. 28–30; Eph. 6. 19, 20; Dan. 3. 17, 18.

(*c*) *Elijah the faithful prophet and preacher.*

1. Instantly obeyed God as commanded. "Go, show thyself unto Ahab." "And Elijah went to show himself unto Ahab." Deut. 13. 4; Exod. 19. 5; 1 Sam. 15. 22; Psa. 103. 20; Dan. 7. 27.

2. Was guided by divine providence. "And as Obadiah was in the way, behold, Elijah met him." Deut. 8. 2, 15; Ezra 7. 27; Gen. 50. 20; Luke 22. 35; Rom. 8. 28.

3. Was employed by God to appoint a specific test of righteous character. "Go, tell thy Lord, Behold, Elijah is here." Job 1. 9–12; 1 Pet. 1. 7; James 1. 3, 12; Gen. 22; Dan. 6; Psa. 66. 10.

4. Impressively illustrated the power of a godly man's word. "As the Lord of hosts liveth, before whom I stand, I will surely show myself unto him to-day." Gen. 30. 33; Acts 27. 31, 32; Prov. 12. 15; 25. 11; 1 Pet. 1. 15; Col. 4. 6.

5. Was by royalty most impudently and shamefully accused. "Art thou he that troubleth Israel?" Gen. 3. 12, 13; Exod. 32. 22–24; Prov. 17. 7; Matt. 27; Josh. 7. 25.

6. Was equal to his opportunity. "I have not troubled Israel; but thou." 1 Sam. 13. 13; 2 Sam. 12. 7–9; Dan. 5. 22, 23; Luke 3. 7; Acts 7. 51; 8. 20; Gal. 2. 11.

7. Testified for God fearlessly in the presence of despotic and depraved royalty. "But thou, and thy father's house, in that ye have forsaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou hast followed Baalim." Deut. 17. 19; Ezek. 2. 6; 1 Sam. 15; 2 Sam. 12; Amos 2. 11.

Lessons:

1. Ahab—the peril of an ungodly marriage.

2. Obadiah—the wisdom of cautious, intelligent, determined obedience.

3. Elijah—the value and beauty of perfect faith in God under all circumstances, and at any personal cost.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Begin with a brief review of the last lesson, its facts and teachings....As Elijah's character was prominent last week, and will be the leading subject in other lessons, emphasize in this lesson the character of Obadiah, following the line of suggestion in the Analytical and Biblical Outline....Three men are here presented—O——, E——, A——; their names, acts, traits of character might be presented....Three meetings are named in the outline, and the teaching might be arranged with reference to them....ILLUSTRATIONS. In Mrs. Wittenmyer's "Women of the Reformation," there are many incidents which could be used to illustrate Obadiah's care for the persecuted prophets, as when the Duchess of Hamilton, in Scotland, and Queen Margaret of Navarre protected the persecuted reformers....Religious men are more useful in peace, and more valiant in war, than wicked men. "Billy Wilson's Zouaves," recruited from the criminal and vagrant classes of New York, never stood fire in a battle. In India, the general was wont to say, where a hard field was to be fought, "Send for Havelock and his saints."

Primary and Intermediate.

BY M. V. M.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Sin is the Troubler.* Print at one side of the board, "Elijah, the Lord's Prophet." At the other side, "Ahab, Satan's Servant." Call out what children know about Elijah, also about Ahab. Contrast the two men, leading to see that the Master we serve makes the difference in our lives. Teach that God's servants and Satan's servants are to be found every-where. Then in the space between the two names print "Meeting," and you are ready for the lesson story, and for the practical teaching that the Lord's children have to meet Satan's children all along life's pathway, and that they must prepare for it. To be taught: 1.) That the Lord sent Elijah to meet Ahab; 2.) That in obeying the Lord Elijah found help from God; 3.) That sin is always the great troubler.

1. Tell where Elijah had been hiding for more than two years from Ahab. The wicked king wanted to kill him because he was the Lord's servant. Now, the Lord told Elijah to go and meet Ahab. Had Ahab, then, changed? No, but God gave Elijah a good promise to take with him (verse 1). God gives his children now good promises when he sends them into places of danger. Read from Bible two or three strong promises of God's presence and protection. Teach that we should never go to meet wicked people unless we are sure God sends us.

2. Elijah obeyed without asking any questions. He knew how angry Ahab was because of the famine, and

there was no sign of rain. Describe the sad state of the country. Tell how Ahab, the king, and Obadiah, one of his great men, were out searching for grass to keep the horses and mules alive. Describe the meeting between Elijah and Obadiah. It must have helped and strengthened Elijah to find one of the Lord's own servants here. When we are obeying the Lord we find helps all along the way. Read from the Bible the last clause of the twelfth verse, and show how strong Obadiah must have grown in his long life of service, to be able to live with the wicked Ahab, and yet serve God.

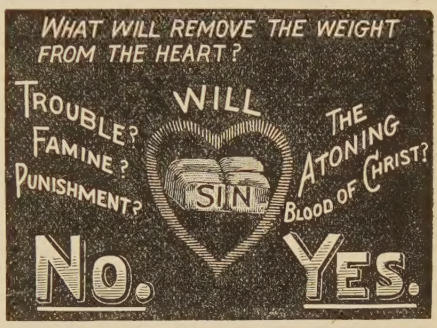
3. Read the last two verses of the lesson. Sin makes the mischief. Tell of a beautiful plant that drooped and died. A worm was found at the root! What was the worm that ate the pure, strong life of God out of Israel? Show that it was idolatry. Any disobedience to God is sin, and sin always kills. Urge children to think if in any way they are disobeying God, and show them that their sin will cause trouble, and that if persisted in will lead to death.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

A land of famine because a land of drought. A land where the grass is brown, where the trees stand with drooping banners of foliage, where the crops are shriveled and dead. Day after day, a hot, blistering sun comes up in the east, and a hot, blistering sun goes down in the west. Homes are blighted. Dumb creatures pant, and in their very looks beg for water. It is Obadiah of the royal household who searches out some stream or fount for the king's horses and mules. Ah, there is water over in that secluded valley. No, it is only a whitish vein of rock that stripes a ledge. But who suddenly confronts Obadiah? The royal official stops. He bows. He prostrates himself. He touches the ground with his forehead. Is it Obadiah's master? No, but one that his master has so persistently hunted for, in cities, in lonely valleys, in mountain-ways, tracking him as a hound would follow a hare, and yet in vain. Now, he has come, of his own accord, alone, and proudly says, "Go, tell thy lord, Behold, Elijah is here!" Will he flee to-day and expose Obadiah to the royal wrath because he has seen and not detained this fugitive, solitary and yet unconquered and defiant? No flight now. "I will surely show myself unto him to-day," says the prophet. They meet at last; the pursuer and the pursued, that royal, blood-thirsty hound and the fugitive, the king and the prophet, Ahab and Elijah. Down, Elijah! Bow to thy king! He bends not. They face one another. They need no introduction, that scowling king with face like a thunder-cloud, and the stern, resolute prophet.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



EXPLANATION. Here is a heart, and on it a burden labeled SIN. What has that to do with the lesson of to-day? Ahab was a great sinner. His heart was weighted down with sin, just as any man's heart may become burdened to this day. The consequence of Ahab's sins brought trouble on him, and on all those around him, but it did not make him a better man. *What will remove the weight of sin from the heart?* Will any amount of bodily suffering? Will might, or power, or force? Will punishment now, or at any future time, purge away sin? NO. The severest judgments will not of themselves humble or change the heart of a sinner. Ahab repented not because of the famine. There is nothing except the atoning blood of Christ that can cleanse the wicked heart.

B. C. 907.] LESSON VI. THE PROPHETS OF BAAL. [Aug. 9.

1 Kings 18. 19-29. [*Commit to memory verses* 19–21.]

19 Now therefore send, *and* gather to me all Is'ra-el unto mount Car'mel, and the prophets of Ba'al four hundred and fifty, and the prophets of the groves four hundred, which eat at Jez'e bel's table.

20 So A'hab sent unto all the children of Is'ra-el, and gathered the prophets together unto mount Car'mel.

21 And E-li'jah came unto all the people, and said, How long halt ye between two opinions? If the LORD *be* God, follow him: but if Ba'al, *then* follow him. And the people answered him not a word.

22 Then said E-li'jah unto the people, I, *even* I only, remain a prophet of the Lord; but Ba'al's prophets *are* four hundred and fifty men.

23 Let them therefore give us two bullocks; and let them choose one bullock for themselves, and cut it in pieces, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under*: and I will dress the other bullock, and lay *it* on wood, and put no fire *under*:

24 And call ye on the name of your gods, and I will call on the name of the LORD: and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God. And all the people answered and said, It is well spoken.

25 And E-li'jah said unto the prophets of Ba'al, Choose you one bullock for yourselves, and dress *it* first; for ye *are* many; and call on the name of your gods, but put no fire *under*.

26 And they took the bullock which was given them, and they dressed *it*, and called on the name of Ba'al from morning even until noon, saying, O Ba'al, hear us. But *there was* no voice, nor any that answered. And they leaped upon the altar which was made.

27 And it came to pass at noon, that E-li'jah mocked them, and said, Cry aloud: for he *is* a god; either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, *or* peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.

28 And they cried aloud, and cut themselves, after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them.

29 And it came to pass, when midday was past, and they prophesied until the *time* of the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that *there was* neither voice, nor any to answer, nor any that regarded.

General Statement.

Let us try to picture the scene of that day. There is the bold mountain summit, rising between Esdraelon and Sharon, covered with the watching hosts of Israel. On the west gleams the blue sea, flashing back the rays of the sun. Above arches the deep blue of an Oriental sky, toward which anxious faces have for three years vainly looked for signs of rain. Yonder are assembled nearly a thousand idol-priests, rallying around the

banners of Baal and Ashtoreth, confident of their power, and expectant of an easy victory, for against them stands but one man, of wild, shaggy form, bronzed from exposure to the elements, and scornful, somber look, as he surveys the throng. In his chariot sits King Ahab, uneasily gazing upon the scene, but his queen is not by his side. Two altars are seen standing: one, the altar of Baal, garlanded with emblems of his worship, and surrounded by his priests, but watched warily by the sharp eyes of Elijah ; the other, the altar of Jehovah, once built of twelve unhewn stones, but now in ruins, destroyed in the recent persecution. The test is proposed—an offering upon which fire shall be invoked—"and the God that answereth by fire, let him be God." We see the altar of Baal piled with the useless sacrifice; we behold the barbaric rites, the priests leaping, dancing, crying around their altar ; we hear the solemn sarcasm of the prophet, casting their shame in their teeth. At last there is silence. The exhausted priests cease from their efforts, and the altar stands alone. There has been no voice, nor any that regarded—Baal is as one dead. And now comes Elijah's hour.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 19. Therefore. See the last lesson, especially its close, where Ahab and Elijah mutually charge upon each other the troubling of Israel with the drought and famine. Elijah directs the king to call an assembly in which the truth shall be tested. **All Israel.** The representatives of the people, and with them as many as could be present. **Mount Carmel.** A ridge rising abruptly from the sea six hundred feet, and running inland twelve miles, gradually growing to a height of one thousand seven hundred feet. It is the southern boundary of the plain of Esdraelon. The traditional place of Elijah's sacrifice is still called *El Mukhrah*, "the burning." **Prophets of Baal.** The same who are elsewhere called priests of Baal, the leaders and teachers of the false religion, probably foreigners from Phenicia. **Prophets of the groves.** (Rev. Ver.) "Prophets of the Asherah." Some suppose Asherah to have been a female divinity corresponding to Baal, while some of the best critics think that the Asherah was a wooden image of Ashtoreth. **Eat at Jezebel's table.** Rather, "from Jezebel's table." They received their support from the queen, but did not sit at her table, which would be in the women's department of the palace. (1) *If a Jezebel would give so much to support a false religion, how much should we contribute to the Gospel which brings us salvation?*

20. So Ahab sent. He dared not refuse, from respect for the prophet, from the desperate condition of the land, from a vague hope that Baal might aid the nation, and more than all, because being a weak man he yielded to the strongest influence at hand. Had Jezebel been near, he might have refused. **All the children of Israel.** That is, to the ten tribes under his rule.

21. Elijah came. The language indicates that he appeared suddenly in presence of the assembly, and uttered his sharp rebuke. **And said.** They expected that he would offer a prayer and remove the ban, but he had other work to do first. (2) *The needs of the soul are more important than those of the body.* **How long halt ye.** Literally, "how long will you go limping and staggering?" A strong caricature of their double-minded service. **Between two opinions.** "Between two thoughts." One day they might be seen bowing at God's altars, the next before the shrine of Baal; just as now some serve the god of worldliness all the week and worship in a pew on Sunday. **If the Lord be God.** Both cannot be God; decide which is, and then live out your choice. **Not a word.** They were conscious of guilt, they felt the truth of Elijah's words, but in heart they clung to Baal and the pleasures of sin. (3) *How hard it is to give up the world for God!*

22. I, even I only. Elijah felt that he stood alone, for against him were king and court, and nearly a thousand idol-priests, while the people had given him no sign of favor. He shows here a sublime courage springing from faith. **Remain a prophet of the Lord.** Many of God's prophets had been slain, the rest were silenced, and on that day Elijah was the only man who dared to proclaim himself a worshiper of the Lord. (4) *Even now he who lives for God must at times stand alone.*

23. Let them therefore give. Because they were so many, they could not object to the test proposed, in which they had every advantage; and Baal was the god of fire, for the name means "the sun-god," according to some authorities. **Two bullocks.** This was the animal generally offered in sacrifice.

24. Call ye on the name of your gods. This they could not refuse, as they attributed the operations of nature to Baal's power. **The God that answereth by fire.** This bold test would show that he was a real power and not a mere name, and would show, too, that he was almighty in power and omniscient in knowledge. So God had answered prayer when both the tabernacle and the temple were dedicated, and out of the fire God had spoken to Moses and to Israel. If the prophet had proposed the test of his own accord, it would have been presumption; but he spoke by a divine direction, and was sure of the result. (5) *God answers prayer still, as all his people can testify.* **Let him be God.** Let him be accepted by the people as their God. **It is well spoken.** The people are agreed that the test is a fair one, and the Baalites dare not reject it.

25. Dress it first, for ye are many. A vein of irony may be seen running through all of Elijah's dialogue. "You are the majority, and shall have the first place." **Your gods.** Idols which were no gods, but which to many of the people were real personalities. **Put no fire under.** Probably the people watched them closely to see that no fraud was perpetrated.

26. Dressed it. Cut it in pieces, and laid it on the altar. **Called on the name of Baal.** Just as in India devotees will repeat for a thousand times an ascription to their divinity, and as Mussulmen will cry, "Allah! Allah!" for an entire day. **No voice.** The god failed them in their hour of need, just as Satan ever deludes his victims. **Leaped upon the altar.** The marginal translation is better, "leaped up and down at the altar," that is, around it; just as the excited dervishes will perform wild antics at the Mohammedan worship.

27. Elijah mocked them. This was in no playful mood, but in the deepest earnestness; and it showed the absolute confidence of the prophet in his own cause, and his courage in the face of his exasperated enemies. (6) *There are forms of unbelief for which ridicule and contempt are the only fitting answer.* **He is a god.** "Surely he must be a god, so cry louder; for perhaps he doesn't hear!" **He is talking.** He is pre-occupied in conversation with some one else, and cannot hear your cries! **He is pursuing.** Literally, "He has withdrawn himself;" has sought retirement, from which you must call him out. **In a journey.** All of these actions, absurd as they seem in a divine being, are spoken of the gods in ancient literature. One writer, in the decay of the Greek religion, wrote, "If the gods should come down to earth now, and act as they did once, they would be put in jail!"

28. Cut themselves. Even now, in certain Mohammedan services, dervishes will chew and swallow glass, pierce their cheeks with knives, and insert needles into their arms and breasts, in the frenzy of their worship. See the account of a scene in Algeria, as related by Esther Beamish, in "A Voice That is Still."

29. They prophesied. "This expression is used in Scripture of any case where there was an utterance of words by persons in a state of religious ecstasy."—*Rawlinson.* See 1 Sam. 18. 10, and 1 Kings 22. 12. **Until the....sacrifice.** That is, the hour when the evening sacrifice was placed on the altar, which is supposed to have been at three o'clock. Perhaps in the mind of the writer there was an implied contrast between this wild scene and the solemn service of that hour in God's house at Jerusalem.

HOME READINGS.

M. The prophets of Baal. 1 Kings 18. 19-29.
Tu. The prophets consulted. 1 Kings 22. 1-14.
W. Unity in serving. Matt. 6. 19-34.
Th. A choice required. Josh. 24. 14-28.
F. Alone, yet mighty. Rom. 11. 1-10.
S. Answer to David by fire. 1 Chron. 21. 18-30.
S. The vanity of idols. Psa. 115. 1-18.

GOLDEN TEXT.

If the Lord be God, follow him. but if Baal, then follow him. 1 Kings 18. 21.

LESSON HYMN. L. M.

Hymnal, No. 447.

O happy day that fixed my choice
On thee, my Saviour and my God!
Well may this glowing heart rejoice,
And tell its raptures all abroad.

O happy bond, that seals my vows
To him who merits all my love!
Let cheerful anthems fill his house,
While to that sacred shrine I move.

'Tis done, the great transaction's done;
I am my Lord's, and he is mine;
He drew me, and I followed on,
Charmed to confess the voice divine.

TIME.—B. C. 907, immediately following the last lesson.

PLACE.—Mount Carmel, on the Mediterranean Sea

RULERS.—See Lesson IV.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION—The folly of idolatry.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. An Assembly, v. 19-21.
What did Elijah direct the king to do?
Of whom was the convention to be composed?
For what purpose did the king call the assembly?
Why did the prophet select Mount Carmel as the place of meeting?
What did he say to the people?

2. A Test, v. 22-25.
What did Elijah propose as a test?
Why was the trial fair for Baal?
Why was no fire to be put under the sacrifice?
How did the people receive the proposal?
Which side made the first trial?

3. A Failure, v. 26-29.
What did Baal's prophets say?
What did they do?
How did Elijah mock them?
What cruel methods did the false prophets employ?
What was the result of their prayers?

Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. The evil of indecision?
2. That the multitude is not always on the side of the right?
3. That wickedness is unsatisfactory?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. An Assembly, v. 19-21.
Whom was Ahab ordered to summon to Carmel?
How many idolatrous prophets were called?
With what question did Elijah greet the people?
What choice did he give them?
What answer was made?

2. A Test, v. 22-25.
What comparison did Elijah make?
What preparation did he propose for each?
What difference in preparation?
What was each party to do?
What was the test proposed?
How was the proposition received?

3. A Failure, v. 26-29.
What were the priests bidden to do?
How was the command obeyed?
What was the result of their prayers?
How did Elijah treat their vain worship?
What further efforts did they make?
How long did they cry to their gods?
Why were their prayers not heard?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we shown—

1. Perfect faith in God?
2. Boldness for the right?
3. Failure of a false trust?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What did Elijah tell Ahab to do? **To gather all the people and the prophets of Baal together at Mount Carmel.**

When they came what did Elijah say to them? **"How long are you going to be undecided which is the true God?"** [Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.]

What did he plan to do taat the people might see and know the true God? **Build two altars, put an offering on each, but put no fire under it.**

Who was to have one of the altars? **The four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal.**

Who the other? **Elijah, as he only was left as a prophet of the Lord.**

What then? **The prophets of Baal were to pray to their god, and Elijah to his.**

What was to decide it? **The God who answered by fire was the God of Israel.**

After the prophets had made their altar just as Elijah said, what did they do? **They cried, from morning until noon, "O Baal, hear us! O Baal, hear us!"**

Were they in earnest? **They danced and leaped around the altar like wild people.**

At noon what did Elijah say? **"Cry louder, for may be your god is talking with some one else, or running; or, perhaps, he is on a journey, or asleep, and cannot hear you."**

What did the prophets of Baal do? **They screamed, and cut themselves with knives until they were covered with blood.**

Did Baal answer? **No; the idol-god could do nothing for them.**

Words with Little People.

If you were asked to-day how long you were going to be undecided whether you would serve God or Satan, what would you answer? It is *either* God *or Satan*, it cannot be *both*. If you have not *before*, say *now*, this summer day: "O Son of God, who lov'st even me, I will be *thine alone*; and all I have, and all I am, shall henceforth be thine own."

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. What did Elijah tell Ahab to do? **To gather all Israel unto Mount Carmel.**

2. How many prophets of Baal were opposed to Elijah, the one prophet of the Lord? **Four hundred and fifty.**

3. What did Elijah propose each party should do? **Prepare a bullock for sacrifice.**

4. What was each party then to do? **Call upon the name of his God.**

5. Which God was to be considered the true one? **The one that answered by fire.**

6. How long did the prophets of Baal call upon their God in vain? **From morning till the evening sacrifice.**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Two Opinions.

I. THE CHALLENGE.
1. *How long halt ye?* v. 21.
"Who is on the Lord's side?" Exod. 32. 26.
2. *If the Lord be God, follow him.* v. 21.
"Choose you this day." Josh. 24. 15.
3. *If Baal, then follow him.* v. 21.
"His servants....whom ye obey." Rom. 6. 16.

II. THE TEST.
1. *Give us two bullocks.* v. 23.
"Bring ye all the tithes." Mal. 3. 10.

2. *Call ye on. . .your gods.* v. 24.
"Images, ye are our gods." Isa. 42. 17.
3. *The God that answereth by fire.* v. 24.
"Our God is a consuming fire." Heb. 12. 29.
4. *Let him be God.* v. 24.
"The Lord is the true God." Jer. 10. 10.

III. THE UNANSWERED CRY.

1. *Called on the name of Baal.* v. 26.
"They fall down....they worship." Isa. 46. 6.
2. *There was no voice.* v. 26.
"Can....not answer, nor save." Isa. 46. 7.
3. *Leaped....cried....cut themselves.* v. 26-28.
"Look... for salvation....far off." Isa. 59. 11.
4. *Neither voice, nor any....answer.* v. 29.
"Mouths, but they speak not." Psa. 115. 5.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

Truth and Error.

1. The test of truth is not popularity. Eight hundred and fifty on one side, and one on the other, did not make Baal right and Elijah wrong. v. 19.

2. Nor is the test of truth found in social standing. "Jezebel's table" may represent the honor that cometh of men, but not the truth of God. v. 19.

3. Truth does not lie always in a mean between two extremes. The people were at a poise between God and Baal, but compromise is not the truth. v. 21.

4. The test of truth is *the fire;* in Elijah's day, the fire of Carmel; in history, the fires of experience, destroying the false and purifying the true; in the future, the fire of eternity, by which every man's work shall be tried. v. 23, 24.

5. Those who will not believe in God are often more credulous and superstitious than those who worship him; witness the follies of spiritualism. v. 26-28.

6. The difference between truth and error is shown in the fact that one is powerless, and the other has divine power. v. 29.

English Teacher's Notes.

Taken merely as a story, the narrative of which the passage for to-day forms a part is one of the most striking and interesting in Scripture. The sight of one man, boldly confronting a hostile crowd, cannot fail to excite sympathy and admiration. Boys, and girls too, respect any one who is not too afraid to face and challenge his enemies. But never was there such a bold challenge as that of Elijah. He appears before the king who has sought his life; he calls for some hundreds of his sworn enemies; he invites the presence of a multitude to whom he is obnoxious, since they consider him the cause of the drought from which they have been suffering. He has none to back him, unless it be the faithful Obadiah. Seldom has a more striking scene been enacted than that which took place upon the slope of Carmel.

But the grandeur of the scene sinks almost into insignificance beside the importance of the occasion which called it up. A most momentous question was to be decided there. People are interested now in any case where there are two claimants to a property, or rather, when the false claimant has to be distinguished from the true. And yet the matter does not personally concern many hundreds of those who eagerly watch the proceedings. But the question to be decided on Carmel concerned most closely every soul present, and will concern every soul until the end of time: Who is to be believed in, worshiped, obeyed? Who is the real arbiter of human life? The people of Israel had not made up their mind. The prophets, four hundred and fifty of them, whom Jezebel patronized, upheld the worship of Baal. The king followed them. Elijah stood there as the witness for Jehovah.

Now what was Baal. He was supposed to be the sun-god. In worshiping him men were doing homage to the grandest object in creation, that which is the source of physical life, health, beauty, and gladness. Men do not now, at least not in civilized countries, worship the sun. They have got beyond that. But why worship that which to them is the highest thing, that which to them means life, and beauty, and happiness. Some worship a vague abstraction which they call Truth. Others worship Humanity. Some give their homage to power, to knowledge, or to pleasure. Some give it to business and money-getting. There are many Baals in these days.

The test by which Elijah proposed to try the claims of Baal, and the claims of Jehovah, was a highly suitable one. If Baal were a real personality, he might be expected to hear and answer his devoted worshiper. And in case it might be said that his power, though real, did not extend to every thing, the one thing demanded—fire—is that over which he was said, as the sun-god, to preside. None could decline such a reasonable test as this.

But it is hard to reach the ear of Baal. From morning until evening the cry goes up: "O Baal, hear us!" And it is accompanied with frantic gestures and with self-inflicted tortures. Similar things may be witnessed now in Mohammedan and heathen countries. There are dancing and howling dervishes, and there are Hindus who undergo severe suffering to propitiate their gods. I have heard of one form of torture called the "hundred fire penance" in which the devotee sits in the scorching sun with a hundred fires blazing around him. Terrible and absurd at the same time! But there are other kinds of torment which men and women among ourselves are undergoing in the service of their gods, of wealth, and fashion, and pleasure, and public opinion. I have just heard of a young man who was such a devotee of what he called pleasures, that he would stay out till five o'clock in the morning, playing at billiards, and arriving at his home would enter by the window, sacrificing time, and strength, and prospects.

And for all this Baal is deaf to his worshipers. Their hearts are never warmed by the fire of true satisfaction. Look at Alexander of Macedon, victorious over his enemies, with the treasures of East and West at his feet. What does he ask for? More worlds to conquer! See the man who has stored up riches in abundance laid at length on a bed of pain: he finds he is in danger; death is approaching; what can his wealth do? It may multiply physicians and medicines, but it cannot save him; in his hour

of supreme need he applies to the god he has worshiped, but there is no answer.

One half of the question, then, has been decided. The claims of Baal cannot hold good. His worshipers have nothing to expect from him. This, at least, is clear to the multitude who stand around, watching the scene. Now each boy and girl may have as clear a decision as to the things which dazzle their mind and attract their admiration and devotion. Some are conscious that the God who gave his own Son for them has some claim upon them. But then there is the world, there are the companions, there are the opinions of others. Here is amusement, finery, admiration, and popularity. Have these been on their trial? Over and over again; and the decision against them—the decision that they are powerless to give real and lasting satisfaction, that they are useless in the time of greatest need—has been recorded over and over again. It may be read in books; it may be heard from the lips of those who have tried for themselves. More than this, there are few who may not discover the verdict in their own experience. When that boy or girl disobeyed the dictates of conscience, and went to sacrifice at the altar of one of these Baals, did the matter pay? Was he or she warmed, gladdened, revived? Why follow a god who cannot hear the cry of need? "O taste and see that the Lord is good; blesseth is the man that trusteth in him."

Bible Reading Lesson Analysis.

The Prophets of Baal. 1 Kings 18. 19-29.

1. The challenge God now invites. "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." John 14. 27; 1 John 5. 4, 5; Eph. 6. 16, 17; Jas. 1. 3; 1 Tim. 1. 18, 19.

2. The confidence in himself God would inspire in us, ver. 19. "I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God." Isa. 44. 6; 43. 10; 46. 5, 9; Matt. 19. 17; Jer. 23. 24.

3. The popular demand for justice expressed and heeded, ver. 20. "And I charged your judges at that time, saying, Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously." Deut. 1. 16; 16. 20; Gen. 18. 25; 1 Kings 3. 11, 12; Ezek. 18. 25, 29.

4. Decision for or against God is still insisted upon, ver. 21. "No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon." Matt. 6. 24; Luke 9. 62; Josh. 24. 14, 15; Exod. 32. 26; Deut. 6. 5; Matt. 22. 37, 38.

5. The Bible does not argue to prove, but assumes God's existence and supremacy, ver. 21. "In the beginning God." Gen. 1. 1; 17. 1; Psa. 90. 2; 139. 1–6; 1 Kings 8. 27; Rom. 16. 27.

6. The power of God was lent to Elijah to use as his own in that emergency, ver. 20. "And thou shalt smite the house of Ahab thy master, that I may avenge the blood of my servants the prophets." 2 Kings 9. 7; Matt. 10. 1; Mark 16. 17, 18; Acts 6. 8; Rom. 15. 18.

7. Power, it is well known, is not always associated with numbers. God is always a majority, ver. 20. "And the Lord said unto Gideon, By the three hundred men that lapped will I save you." Judges 7. 7; Dan. 3. 17; Heb. 11. 33, 34; Josh. 6. 20; 2 Chron. 14. 11.

8. Knowledge is gained by experiment, vers. 23, 24. "O taste and see that the Lord is good." Psa. 34. 8; John 7. 17; Eccl. 1. 16; 1 John 4. 1; Mal. 3. 10.

9. Idols are utterly impotent, valueless, absurd, ver. 24. "We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is none other God but one." 1 Cor. 8. 4; Deut. 4. 28; Jer. 10. 5; 18. 15; Isa. 45. 20.

10 None but God can kindle the holy, purifying fire of a genuine religious experience in the heart of man, ver. 24. "And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." Acts 2. 1–3; Heb. 12. 29; Matt. 3. 12; Mal. 3. 3; 1 Thess. 5. 19.

11. The world, the Baal of to-day, can do nothing for man in his real extremity, ver. 26. "For what is a man profited if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Matt. 16. 26; Psa. 49. 6, 7; 1 John 2. 15–17; Eccl. 2. 1, 3, 10, 11; 11. 9; 1 Cor. 7. 30, 31.

12. It was not strange that Baal did not respond to all this sincerity and repetition of importunity, vers. 27–29. "Woe unto him that saith to the wood, Awake; to the dumb stone, Arise, it shall teach!" Hab. 2. 19; 1 Cor. 12. 2; Psa. 115. 4–8; Gal. 4. 8; 1 Cor. 8. 4.

Lessons:

1. God proves his being and his grace by communicating through faith the refining fire of holy experience.

2. Religion has its certitudes. Consciousness is absolutely trustworthy. We know that God hath power on earth to forgive sin and cleanse from all unrighteousness.

3. Religious conditions are all practicable. Any one can fully experiment. Meet these conditions and there will be but one opinion.

4. In the space between two opposing opinions there is not room enough for character to grow. Decision is necessary to character, and character is destiny.

5. By repentance, belief, and confession we are to get the sacrifice of our hearts ready for God's altar.

6. Brother, has the divine fire not fallen? Are you sure the sacrifice was prepared aright? Have you prayed to Baal?

Berean Methods.

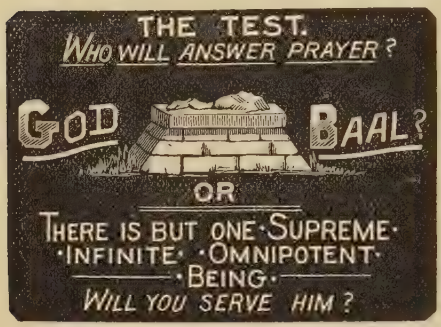
Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Recall the events of the last lesson, which are directly connected with this.... The facts of this lesson might be presented under the following outline: 1. A *mountain*—where? appearance? 2. An *assembly*—who suggested, summoned, composed it, and for what purpose? 3. A *rebuke*—who gave it, to whom, and for what, do any of us need it? 4. A *proposition*—who made it? what was it? how received? 5. An *altar*—to what god? the sacrifice, prayers, result? 6. A *mockery*—by whom? of whom? in what words? was it right?.... The lessons concerning truth and error are shown in the Additional Practical Lessons.... Practical suggestions—find here: 1. A call to duty. 2. A call to prayer. 3. Why it was in vain.... ILLUSTRATIONS. Somewhat like Elijah was that Hindu child who one night knocked down all the idols in his father's house, except the largest one, in the hands of which he put a stick. Next morning, when they asked, "Who has done this?" he said, "Perhaps the big god has been beating the little gods!".... See in books of travel in the East accounts of "dancing dervishes" quite similar to these priests of Baal in their forms of worship.

References. FREEMAN'S HAND-BOOK. Vers. 26–28: Mode of offering sacrifices to Baal, 184. Ver. 26: Repetitions in prayer, 645. Ver. 27: Habits of a heathen god, 309. Ver. 28: Lacerations in heathen worship, 310.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.



DIRECTIONS. Draw the altar, like the design, or make any simple representation of some stones piled together. Write the inscription, and have all ready before the school assembles. Or you can draw two altars, one of falsehood, and one of truth. Write over all these words: "You must choose one." A banner can be made. Write over it: "Do I serve God or Satan? I cannot serve both."

THERE IS BUT ONE GOD. 1 Cor. 8. 6.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *Following.*

Put lesson symbol on the board. Ask what it is. Who ever saw a sign-post? What is it for? Where is it placed? Teach that there are two ways for every little boy and girl. Print "Self," or "Satan," on one arm of the sign-post, and "God" on the other. Show that every child follows either God or Satan. Every man and woman now living follows either God or Satan. Ask what it is to follow? Tell of little boy who walked behind his father one day and put his little feet into the very tracks his father had made. When we follow God we look to see the prints of his feet, and we try to step just there. When we follow Satan we go where he goes.

Recall the meeting of Elijah and Ahab. God sent Elijah to meet the angry king, so he took care of him. Ahab was not allowed to harm the servant of the Lord. Tell how, in "Pilgrim's Progress," when Christian came up to the lions, he found they were chained.

Tell what Elijah asked of Ahab. Why did he want to call all the people to a great meeting? Show that he wanted them to choose whom they would follow. See if children understand that they were now following Satan, because they were disobeying God. So, if we see a boy breaking the Sabbath, using bad words, disobeying his parents, etc., we know that he is following Satan.

Make a perpendicular line on the board. On one side print "Jehovah," on the other "Baal." On the Jehovah side make one straight mark to stand for Elijah. On the Baal side make a great many marks to represent the idolaters. Tell that Elijah wanted these Baal people to come over the line, and be among the Lord's people. How could they do it? By obeying God. How can a child who follows Satan come over on the Lord's side? By turning his back on sin, and beginning to follow the Lord, that is, to obey the Lord.

Make something to represent the two altars. Tell what Elijah proposed, and ask the children if that was fair. Then describe the scene—the prophets of Baal calling upon their god hour after hour, screaming and crying, and cutting themselves with knives until the blood ran, and still no answer. Why? Because an idol cannot hear or help. Only the God of heaven can hear prayer and answer. To whom do we look for our blessings, for our good things and good times? Teach that only God can give really good things, and that the time to choose him is now when we are young.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

People are coming in every direction to the slopes of Carmel, once so green but now brown with the drought. You can see them following some path through the fields, or hurrying up from the sea-shore, or in groups they travel along some beaten highway. What a gathering of Israel! What a massing, too, of Baal's prophets, by the hundred, and over against them stands a single man, that bold, fearless prophet of God, Elijah. One man confronting all that array of hateful, idolatrous sentiment! He is speaking now to the people. He urges them to choose between God and Baal. Does Ahab bend forward and contemptuously listen? Do the prophets sneer and mutter? The people are hushed. They admire Elijah's boldness, but make no answer. "What is he saying now?" cry the sneering prophets. Does he challenge them to prove that Baal is God? "Slay a bullock," they mutter, "cut it up, lay it on wood, put no fire under—and he do the same—to see which God will answer by fire? Nonsense!" They make him no reply. Is it the silence of fear? The people though are shouting: "It is well spoken." O if Elijah had suggested something easier, a battle for instance, and they could have had the privilege of cutting *him* up! No, it must be a bullock that goes to the altar. It must be an answer by fire. There is no escape; they must prepare a sacrifice. They labor with seeming zeal, but with what secret reluctance! O if they could get out of the way this troubler of Israel, who, absent, gives them no peace, and who, present, throws them into worse confusion! They surround their altar, and what a frenzied, crazy time follows! They shout to Baal. They leap, dance around the altar, a raving, howling, shrieking mob. In dizzy whirls they agonize and shout. It is noon now. The hot sun, parching all the land, consents to burn every thing else, but not a kindling ray does he dart down on the altar. If he would only pity and help poor, blind, dumb, helpless Baal in his dark grove! It is Elijah, that troubler of Israel, who now steps forward and incites the idolaters to new efforts. He taunts them. He bids them cry aloud and wake the drowsy god, or, if away, bring him back to his duty. They double, treble their efforts. They gash themselves with knives. They shout themselves hoarse. They leap till they are sore. With distorted features, they rave about the altar, a whirlpool, a maelstrom of idolatrous frenzy, hour after hour. It is all in vain. There is only a cold, dead bullock on the altar, only a mass of unburnt wood, and in the grove is a helplessly grinning idol. If Elijah had only proposed something easier!

B. C. 907.] LESSON VII. THE PROPHET OF THE LORD. [Aug. 16.

1 Kings 18. 30-46. [*Commit to memory verses* 36–39.]

30 And E-li'jah said unto all the people, Come near unto me. And all the people came unto him. And he repaired the altar of the LORD *that was* broken down.

31 And E-li'jah took twelve stones, according to the number of the tribes of the sons of Ja'cob, unto whom the word of the LORD came, saying, Is'ra-el shall be thy name:

32 And with the stones he built an altar in the name of the LORD: and he made a trench about the altar, as great as would contain two measures of seed.

33 And he put the wood in order, and cut the bullock in pieces, and laid *him* on the wood, and said, Fill four barrels with water, and pour *it* on the burnt sacrifice, and on the wood.

34 And he said, Do *it* the second time. And they did *it* the second time. And he said, Do *it* the third time. And they did *it* the third time.

35 And the water ran round about the altar; and he filled the trench also with water.

36 And it came to pass at *the time of* the offering of the *evening* sacrifice, that E-li'jah the prophet came near, and said, LORD God of A'bra-ham, I'saac, and of Is'ra-el, let it be known this day that thou *art* God in Is'ra-el, and *that* I *am* thy servant, and *that* I have done all these things at thy word.

37 Hear me, O LORD, hear me, that this people may know that thou *art* the LORD God, and *that* thou hast turned their heart back again.

38 Then the fire of the LORD fell, and consumed the burnt sacrifice, and the wood, and the stones, and the dust, and licked up the water that *was* in the trench.

39 And when all the people saw *it*, they fell on their faces: and they said, The LORD, he *is* the God; the LORD, he *is* the God.

40 And E-li'jah said unto them, Take the prophets of Ba'al; let not one of them escape. And they took them: and E-li'jah brought them down to the brook Ki'shon, and slew them there.

41 And E-li'jah said unto A'hab, Get thee up, eat and drink; for *there is* a sound of abundance of rain.

42 So A'hab went up to eat and to drink. And E-li'jah went up to the top of Car'mel; and he cast himself down upon the earth, and put his face between his knees.

43 And said to his servant, Go up now, look toward the sea. And he went up, and looked, and said, *There is* nothing. And he said, Go again seven times.

44 And it came to pass at the seventh time, that he said, Behold, there ariseth a little cloud out of the sea, like a man's hand. And he said, Go up, say unto A'hab, Prepare *thy chariot*, and get thee down, that the rain stop thee not.

45 And it came to pass in the meanwhile, that the heaven was black with clouds and wind, and there was a great rain. And A'hab rode, and went to Jez're-el.

46 And the hand of the Lord was on E-li'jah; and he girded up his loins, and ran before A'hab to the entrance of Jez're-el.

General Statement.

A thousand votaries of Baal and Ashtoreth have striven in vain to bring down fire, and now their cries are dying away in hoarse screams, and their bloody forms lie worn out around their altar. One lone, solitary man now steps forward, and every eye is riveted upon him. Yonder upon the mountain-side stands a ruined altar to the God of Israel, once fragrant with incense, now desolate from the hands of persecutors. The man of God gathers its scattered stones, and heaps up twelve into a mass, forming a rude altar, representative of the unity of Israel amid all its separations. Upon it he lays the wood for the burnt-offering, and above it the four quarters of a slain bullock. Then he pours over all jar after jar of water, until altar and offering are soaked through and through. There can now be no deception, and Elijah sends upward his brief, calm petition, while the thousands of Israel stand breathless. A moment, and a blinding light is seen, soundless and still, descending from the skies. It falls upon the offering; it consumes the wood; it crumbles the stone; it licks up the water. Jehovah is vindicated, and Baal falls from his throne. There is another act in the drama, a scene of judgment, when the priests of Baal, who have corrupted the nation, are slaughtered relentlessly, according to the pitiless law; necessary, because Israel, the hope of the world, must be kept pure at all cost. While the king and the people observe the sacrificial feast around the smoking altar heap, Elijah climbs the mountain for solitary prayer. We see him bowed low, with forehead on the earth; we witness his seven times repeated petition, and we see the cloud like a man's hand rising from the sea, bringing the long-desired rain. A royal chariot bounds across the plain amid the storm, and before it runs the messenger of Jehovah, at Ahab's right hand, to nerve him with courage in the new way of reform.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 30. Elijah said. This was after the failure of the priests, in the afternoon of the day. **Unto all the people.** He leaves the priests to their frenzied prayers, and turns to the people, whose return to God is the object of his endeavor. **Come near.** He called them that they might observe his acts, be assured of the thoroughness of his test, and listen to his prayer. **Repaired the altar.** Thereby showing that it was no new worship which he was about to introduce, but a restoration of the old one. **Which was broken down.** This verse, together with chap. 19. 10, shows that under the influence of the prophets altars to God had been erected in the Ten Tribes, probably to counteract the influence of the calf-worship; in the letter, but not in the spirit, a violation of the Mosaic law requiring but one altar. These had been destroyed under Jezebel's persecution, and now Elijah rebuilds one of them.

31. Twelve stones. Thus showing that though the unity of "the twelve tribedom" was broken outwardly, yet in heart all Israel was one. **Unto whom the word of the Lord came.** Perhaps the prophet repeated this ancient declaration while erecting the altar. **Israel shall be thy name.** This name was given to Jacob twice, first at his wrestle with the angel (Gen. 32. 28), and afterward, when he put away the "strange gods" among his family. Gen. 35. 2–10. Perhaps the latter naming is the one here referred to. (1) *God's Church is one, notwithstanding its various organizations.* (2) *Those only who follow their spiritual ancestor are worthy of his name.*

32. And with the stones. They were rough, unhewn stones, loosely piled together, with earth in the center. **In the name of the Lord.** Dedicating it, when erected, to the name of the Lord God of Israel. **A trench about the altar.** So that the altar might be soaked with water and at the same time surrounded by it. **As great as.** Deep enough to contain twelve quarts of water, which was amply sufficient to show that no deception was practiced. (3) *God's work seeks no concealment, but is open.*

33. Put the wood in order. Upon the altar wood was piled up, and upon the wood the sacrifice was laid, after being cut into quarters. **Fill four barrels.** This should be "water-jars," or pitchers, such as are carried on the head. **With water.** Some have thought that this came from a covered and unfailing spring near by, which may still be seen. But it was more likely salt water from the Mediterranean Sea, provided in advance by the prophet's order.

34, 35. The third time. Thus making twelve jars in all, perhaps one for each tribe. **Ran round about.** It drenched the offering, penetrated every chink and crevice between the stones, and formed a little rivulet around the altar.

36. Time of offering. If the work was begun at this hour, as might be inferred from the closing verse of the last lesson, the final act must have been later than three o'clock. But Elijah may have begun his work while the idol-priests were still praying, and have completed it just at this time, when they gave up their vain attempt. **Elijah the prophet.** In this hour, the crisis of his life, and the turning-point of the history, he receives his proper title. **Came near and said.** Contrast the directness, the calmness, and the confidence of his prayer with the frenzied orgies of the Baal-priests! **Lord God of Abraham, Isaac, and of Israel.** The very formula which had been proclaimed

at the burning bush of Horeb (Exod. 3. 15), and a suggestion that he who had once before been revealed in fire would in like manner appear again. **Let it be known.** He did not specify the form of the manifestation, though he knew that it would be by descending flame. **That thou art God.** Elijah's great desire was for the glory of God. **I am thy servant.** This was no selfish ambition, but a humble desire that his mission might be recognized as from God. **These things at thy word.** Not only the shutting up of the heavens for three years, but the slaughter of the priests of Baal, which was soon to be wrought; acts which would expose him to great reproach, and for which a vindication from God was needed. (4) *Happy is that man who acts consciously under a divine direction.* (5) *He who lives for God is sure of God's care.*

37. Hear me. The destiny of the nation was at stake. If Elijah's prayer had failed of answer, his whole life would have been in vain, and his people might never have been redeemed. **Turned their hearts back.** They had forsaken their father's God, and Elijah's highest desire is that they may be brought back to his service. See in Elijah's yearning a foretaste of Paul's self-denying zeal. Rom. 9. 1-3.

38. Fire of the Lord. Not a stroke of lightning. The sky was clear. An electrical discharge could not produce the effect. How it was done we need not know. It was as if one intensely brilliant flame came from the sky, consuming every thing. It was a great miracle, but what was it compared with the miracle of the incarnation of the Son of God, and his suffering, death, and resurrection, that our hearts might be turned unto him. **The stone and the dust.** The intense heat crumbled the stones, and reduced the earth to a fine powder, and dried up the water in the trench.

39. They fell on their faces. Overwhelmed by the glory of the divine manifestation. **The Lord, he is the God.** Perhaps it would be better to read, "Jehovah, he is the God," the only God, for Baal was "no god." Thus in a day the nation professed itself God's people, but the popular faith soon passed away, and on the morrow Elijah found himself alone once more. (6) *The profession made under excitement is less enduring than that growing out of calm conviction.*

40. Take the prophets of Baal. This was a test of the people's sincerity, and an act which would at once separate them forever from the Baalite religion. His purpose was to make thorough work, and leave no chance for a return to idolatry. **Brook Kishon.** Rising at the foot of Mount Tabor, skirting Carmel on its north-eastern side, it empties into the Mediterranean at Ptolemais. It is perennial only in its lower portion, but as it drains a large surface, it becomes a torrent after heavy rains. It may have been chosen that the coming rain might sweep the slain and their blood into the sea. The present name is *Nahr-el-Mukatta*—"the river of slaughter." **Slew them.** Not with his own hand, but by his orders. This act was justified by the command of the law (Deut. 17. 2-5), and by the necessities of the time, for there was no other way to save the nation; and that the Baalites fully deserved their fate may be believed from our knowledge of the wickedness connected with their worship. Israel was the one people intrusted with the light of the world, and its safety from false religion was the highest necessity for all the after ages.

41. Said unto Ahab. Who had been an unwilling spectator of the scene. **Get thee up.** To the mountain-top near the altar. **Eat and drink.** A sacrificial meal followed every offering, and was a part of the service. By participating in it, the king would sanction the worship of the Lord, and the destruction of the priests of Baal. **Sound of abundance of rain.** Perhaps the quickened senses of the prophet felt a change in the atmosphere; perhaps it was a supernatural intimation.

42. Ahab went up. Not to an ordinary banquet, but a religious feast. **Elijah went up.** Perhaps to the point which overlooks the sea. Here he sought a secluded place among the trees and crags for prayer. **Cast himself down.** Knelt with head forward, perhaps touching the ground; a humble position for one who had just come from scenes of triumph. (7) *The greatest of men is honored by humiliation before God.*

43. His servant. Tradition says that this servant was the son of the widow of Zarephath, and that he afterward became the prophet Jonah. **Go up.** To a higher point and a broader view. **Looked toward the sea.** He had no doubt that his prayer would be answered, and that is the spirit that brings answer. **Go again seven times.** Seven in the Bible is the number of completeness. (8) *We must pray perseveringly until the answer comes.*

44. At the seventh time. God sometimes tries our faith to the last, but "he is faithful that promised." **A little cloud.** Sailors say that a small cloud on the horizon is a sign of a coming storm. (9) *We should not overlook the first intimations that God is about to shower down his mercy.* **Go up, say unto Ahab.** Ahab was farther inland, on higher ground. **Get thee down.** Jezreel is in the valley. **Rain stop thee not.** He must cross the Kishon, which would be so swollen by the coming rain as to be impassable. Elijah was confident that the rain would come, and that abundantly.

45. In the meantime. Before Ahab had reached his destination the storm came. **Ahab rode.** Down the mountain, and across the plain to Jezreel, which was sixteen miles distant. **Jezreel.** A city in the tribe of Issachar, and the summer-home of the Israelite kings.

46. Hand of the Lord. Hand frequently denotes strength in Hebrew. It may mean a strong inward impulse, as in Ezek. 1. 3; 3. 14, 22, etc. Under divine direction, probably with divine help, he **ran before Ahab** the sixteen miles to Jezreel. Probably to keep him in mind of the recent events, and support the irresolute monarch in carrying out the reformation thus begun.

HOME READINGS.

M. The prophet of the Lord. 1 Kings 18. 30-46.
Tu. Jacob builds an altar. Gen. 35. 1-8.
W. Draw near to God. James 4. 1-10.
Th. God's word to Jacob. Gen. 32. 24-32.
F. In the name of the Lord. 1 Cor. 10. 22-33.
S. Prayer that God may be known. Psa. 83. 1-18.
S. The Lord is God. Psa. 100. 1-5.

GOLDEN TEXT.

The Lord, he is the God; the Lord, he is the God. 1 Kings 18. 39.

LESSON HYMN. C. M.

Hymnal, No. 120

O God, we praise thee, and confess
That thou the only Lord
And everlasting Father art,
By all the earth adored.

"O holy, holy, holy Lord,
Whom heavenly hosts obey,
The world is with the glory filled
Of thy majestic sway.

The holy Church throughout the world,
O Lord, confesses thee,
That thou eternal Father art,
Of boundless majesty.

TIME.—B. C. 907, immediately following the last lesson.

PLACES.—1. Mount Carmel; 2. The Brook or River Kishon, north of Carmel: 3. Jezreel, at the foot of Mount Gilboa.

RULERS.—See Lesson IV.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION.—The power of prayer.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Preparation, v. 30-35.
What did Elijah say to the people?
What did he do?
Why did he make a trench about the altar?
Why was so much water poured upon the sacrifice?

2. The Prayer, v. 36, 37.
How did Elijah address God?
For what three things did he pray?
What result did he expect as an answer?

3. The Answer, v. 38-46.
How was the sacrifice consumed?
What proved that the fire was from the Lord?
How did the people acknowledge it?
What was done with the prophets of Baal?
What did Elijah say to Ahab?
For what did he go to the top of Carmel?

How many times did his servant look seaward, and why?
What did the servant finally see?
How was the drought ended.

Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. That a return to God is a return to prosperity?
2. That repentance involves the forsaking of sin?
3. That fervent prayer availeth much?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Preparation, v. 30–35.
What witnesses did Elijah summon?
What was his first preparation?
What material did he use?
How many stones did he take?
With what did he surround the altar?
How much did a "measure" contain? ANS. About six quarts.
How did the prophet arrange the sacrifice?
What order did he then give?
How often was this repeated?

2. The Prayer, v. 36, 37.
When did Elijah begin his prayer?
To whom did he pray?
What did he ask for?

3. The Answer, v, 38–46.
How was Elijah's prayer answered?
What was the verdict of the people?
What did the people do at Elijah's command?
What assurance did the prophet give to the king?
Where did Elijah go in prayer?
How many times was the servant bidden to look for token of rain?
What token did he at last see?
Upon what message was he sent?
How was Elijah's prayer answered?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. That faith in God knows no impossibilities?
2. That God honors the faith of his servants?
3. That true faith is patient in waiting for answers to prayer?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

After the prophets of Baal had failed to make their god hear, what did Elijah say to the people? **"Come near to me."**

When they came what did Elijah do? **Took twelve stones and repaired an altar of the Lord that was broken down.**

Then what did he do? **Dug a trench around the altar, piled wood upon it, and placed the bullock on the wood.**

What did he tell the people to do three times? **Fill four barrels with water and pour it upon the offering, filling the trench.**

How could they get twelve barrels of water if it had not rained for more than three years?

When they had obeyed what did Elijah do? **He prayed to his God.** [Read every word of this beautiful prayer in your LESSON STORY.]

Did Elijah's God answer? **Yes; the fire from heaven fell; it burned the offering, the wood, the stones, the dust, and the water in the trench.**

When the people saw it what did they say? [Repeat GOLDEN TEXT.]

What did Elijah do next? **Told the people to seize all the prophets, not to let one escape, and take them to the brook Kishon, at the foot of the mountain.**

What for? **That they might be put to death for deceiving the people.**

After the prophets had been destroyed, what did Elijah tell King Ahab? **"To get ready to go home, for a great rain was coming."**

Was there any sign of rain? **No; but Elijah went to the top of Mount Carmel, bowed his head to the ground, and prayed.**

After praying, what did he say to his servant? **"Go up, and look toward the sea."** [nothing."

What answer did the servant bring? **"I see**

How many times did Elijah pray and send his servant to look? **Seven times.**

What did the servant answer the seventh time? **"I see a little cloud, no larger than a man's hand, rising out of the sea."**

What command did Elijah give? **"Go and tell King Ahab to get into his chariot, and ride home, or the rain will stop him."**

How about that little cloud the servant saw? **It grew larger and larger until the heavens were black, and there came a great rain.**

What did Elijah do? **He gathered up his long robes, and ran before the chariot to Ahab's palace.**

Words with Little People.

PRAYER.—"O God, we thy little children *believe in* THEE; help us to love thee; help us to praise thee; help us all our lives to believe that *thou*, and *thou only*, art the Lord God." "OUR Father who art in heaven."

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. What did Elijah do when he had called all the people to him? **Made an altar of twelve stones.**

2. When he had prepared the sacrifice what did he have done? **Water poured on it three times.**

3. What did Elijah pray the Lord to do? **"Let it be known....that thou art God."**

4. What followed Elijah's supplication? **"The fire of the Lord fell."**

5. What did the people say when they saw the fire of the Lord consume the burnt sacrifice? **"The Lord, he is the God."**

6. What was done with the prophets of Baal? **They were slain.**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

Jehovah Vindicated.

I. BY SACRIFICIAL FIRE.
1. *Elijah....came near.* v. 36.
"It is good....to draw near to God." Psa. 73. 28.
2. *Let it be known.* v. 36.
"All the people shall know." Isa. 9. 9.
3. *That thou art God.* v. 36.
"There is none else." Isa. 45. 22.
4. *That I am thy servant.* v. 36.
"Discern between....him that serveth....and....not." Mal. 3. 18.
5. *That thou hast turned their heart.* v. 37.
"Turn thou us unto thee, O Lord." Lam. 5. 21.
6. *The fire of the Lord fell.* v. 38.
"He shall baptize you with....fire." Matt. 3. 11.
7. *Consumed the....sacrifice.* v. 38.
"Acceptable to God." 1 Pet. 2. 5.
8. *The Lord, he is the God.* v. 39.
"This God is our God forever." Psa. 48. 14.

II. BY AVENGING SWORD.
1. *Take the prophets of Baal.* v. 40.
"Is not destruction to the wicked?" Job 31. 3.
2. *Let not one....escape.* v. 40.
"As many as have sinned." Rom. 2. 12.
3. *Brought them down.* v. 40.
"To the slaughter; woe unto them!" Jer. 50. 27.
4. *Slew them there.* v. 40.
"I will....avenge me of mine enemies." Isa. 1. 24.

III. BY MERCIFUL RAIN.
1. *There is a sound of abundance of rain.* v. 41.
"The Lord is....plenteous in mercy." Psa. 103. 8.
2. *Elijah went up.* v. 42.
"At the hour of prayer." Acts 3. 1.
3. *Cast himself....upon the earth.* v. 42.
"He prayed earnestly." James 5. 17.
4. *Go again seven times.* v. 43.
"If we hope....we with patience wait." Rom. 8. 25.
5. *A little cloud.* v. 44.
"The clouds are the dust of his feet." Nahum 1. 3.

6. *And there was a great rain.* v. 45.
"He shall come unto us as the rain." Hosea 6. 3.
"A plentiful rain....when.....weary." Psa. 68. 9.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

The Requisites for Successful Prayer.

Successful prayer requires—

1. A soul in fellowship with God, as was Elijah. v. 30-37.

2. A covenant of God with his people, upon which the supplication rests. This is suggested by the "twelve tribes" constituting the covenant people, and by the names of the three patriarchs. v. 36.

3. An act of sacrifice. Elijah looked to the virtue of a coming sacrifice; we to one rendered centuries ago.

4. An earnest desire, which, expressed or unexpressed, forms the burden of the petition.

5. Strong faith in God's power and willingness. Had we Elijah's faith we should see answers to prayer no less wonderful than his.

6. Perseverance, not ceasing from the petition until its answer is received. v. 44.

English Teacher's Notes.

THAT which will not bear testing is worthless. The tradesman to whom you hand a piece of money will fling the coin on the counter to discover if it is good or bad. If it ring false he will not receive it. You may buy at some shops glittering ornaments which appear to be all jewels and gold. But take them to the jeweler, and if they cannot stand the test he applies he will tell you they are utterly without value. When you present a check at the bank for payment you are testing its genuineness. If it bear the test, if the cash be handed you in exchange for it, all is well. But supposing the cashier refuses to honor it. There must be some mistake about the check, something wrong, some false signature. There is but one other alternative, namely, that the bank itself has failed. Its supposed ability to meet demands is a deception if it cannot stand the test.

We saw in the last lesson how the claims of Baal and of his worshipers were put to the test before the king and the people of Israel, and how they were proved utterly worthless. To-day we have to look at the claims of Jehovah, as put forth by his prophet, Elijah. "If the Lord be God, then follow him," says Elijah. He alone among the assembly claims for Jehovah the undivided allegiance of Israel, and as the Lord's servant he is willing to put these claims to the test. Notice three things about his conduct:

1. He is in no undue haste about the matter. He can quietly wait while the priests of Baal are calling upon their God, "from morning until evening." And after they have failed there is no hurry in his movements. He bids the people come near; in their sight he carefully and deliberately repairs the ruined altar of God, reminding them, by the twelve stones, of their obligations to the God of their fathers.

2. He is not afraid to make the test as thorough and searching as possible, by drenching the wood and the sacrifice laid upon it, and filling a deep trench round about the altar with water sufficient to extinguish an ordinary fire.

3. He prays simply and confidently. There is no excitement, no shouting nor leaping, no crying and wounding. Having, if I may so speak, drawn the check faithfully and correctly, he presents it in perfect trust.

And it is at once honored! No mistake about this heavenly fire. The drenched and dripping sacrifice, the wood, the stones, the dust, the water, are all nothing before it. The claims put forward by Elijah had stood the test. Jehovah had heard the prayer of his servant, and had answered it to the full.

But Elijah has yet another check to present. Not this time in the presence of the people. For that there is no need. He counts upon the answer, and bids Ahab prepare for it. Then he goes up to the top of Carmel to pray. The first prayer brought down fire. The second prayer brought down a plenteous rain upon parched and famine-stricken land. Jehovah was not limited to the one test of fire. His power was not exhausted.

There are plenty who will tell young people today that religion is a tiresome, gloomy thing; that the service of God is hard and irksome, and yields no pleasure or profit to those who engage in it. The faithful teacher will give a contrary witness. How are the young to know which is right? Let them test the claims put forward by the Lord's servants, and see whether or no he is worthy to be served. David, King of Israel, and Philip of Bethsaida, both invited their friends to test the record that they gave: "Taste and see." Psa. 34. 8. "Come and see." John 1. 46. There are two different ways of testing. There is

(1) The way adopted by the people of Israel. They stood on Carmel to witness what was done. They drew near to Elijah, and saw the altar raised and the sacrifice laid on it. They even assisted him by fetching the water. They listened to his prayer. They watched him present the check. They beheld the answer, and were convinced—forced to confess: "The Lord, he is the God!" So impressed were they that, at the command of Elijah (carrying out Deut. 13. 3), they at once seized the priests of Baal and slew them. Later on they shared in the benefits of the rain. And yet their hearts were untouched. In spite of all they had witnessed they did not turn to the Lord.

There are things as convincing to be seen now. Here is a life cold, and selfish, and dull, and gloomy. Suddenly the fire of divine love descends upon it and it is changed, transfigured, becomes full of warmth, and zeal, and brightness. Here is the mourner rejoicing, the burdened one walking lightly; here are persons with little enough of this world's wealth or pleasure satisfied and happy. Here is a sufferer who has comfort to spare for others; a dying one full of joyful anticipation. Watch these servants of God, and you see their checks are honored. This ought to convince, but this alone cannot convert.

(2) The way taken by Elijah himself. He did not watch others. This is a good way, but his was a better one still. He presented the check himself. He put the Lord's power, and the Lord's willingness to hear, to the proof, not because he had any doubt, but because he was in need. The sign which worked conviction in the people brought triumph and glad thanksgiving to him. It inspired him with fresh faith, so that he foretold the rain before he had ever asked for it. This is the best and happiest test. Come to God yourself in faith, and you will find in your own experience that he is indeed "a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."

Bible Reading Lesson Analysis.

The Prophet of the Lord. 1 Kings 18. 30-46.

1. Living near the Lord in person, as all Christians should be living, let us urge others to come and test him, ver. 30. "O taste and see that the Lord is good." Psa. 34. 8; 1 Pet. 2. 3; Jer. 29. 13; 1 Cor. 1. 9; Micah 7. 20.

2. God convinces, satisfies, only those that come near to him, through his agents, ver. 30. "No man cometh unto the Father but by me." John 14. 6, 16; 15. 4, 7; Deut. 5. 27; Isa. 1. 18; Jas. 4. 8.

3. Man has his part to do would he gain the saving attention of God, vers. 31-33. "Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be saved." Acts 27. 31; Gen. 6. 14, 18; Heb. 11. 7; Acts 17. 30; 2. 1-3.

4. The twelve stones used by Elijah to build his altar represented the unity of Israel; so God's people are one in all ages and places, ver. 31. "And he said, Thy name shall be called no more Jacob, but Israel; for as a prince hast thou power with God and with men, and hast prevailed." Gen. 32. 28; Deut. 32. 9; 2 Tim. 2. 19; 1 Peter 1. 15; Rev. 21. 3.

5. To get ready for the purifying fire from above we must arrange the altar of the heart, ver. 33. "If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me." Psa. 66. 18; 1 Sam. 7. 3; Prov. 23. 26; Mal. 3. 10; Matt. 15. 18.

6. We must extinguish every lingering spark of the fire of self-sufficiency, vers. 33-35. "There is a generation that are pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness." Prov. 30. 12; Luke 15. 16; Matt. 5. 20; 23. 25-28; Isa. 65. 5.

7. We can acceptably arrange the sacrifice by repentance, belief, and confession, but God can only afford the sin-consuming flame, ver. 38. "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy, he saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Titus 3. 5; 2 Tim. 1. 9; Rom. 11. 6; Matt. 3. 11; Prov. 20. 9.

8. Elijah wrought in all this daring earnestness for God's glory, and not for himself, ver. 37. "Hear me, O Lord, hear me, that this people may know that thou art the Lord God." John 13. 15; 17. 4; 1 Chron. 16. 28; Isa. 42. 8; Psa. 57. 5.

9. The history of Christian experience shows that when the sacrifice is ready the divine fire is not long delayed, ver. 38. "The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise." Psa. 51. 17; Mal. 3. 10; Luke 15. 7, 10; Eph. 1. 13; 1 John 1. 9.

10. As the servants of God we may at any time be called upon to do very unpleasant duties, ver. 36. "Not with eye-service, as men-pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart." Eph. 6. 6; 2 Chron. 32. 31; Deut. 8. 2. 16; Jas. 1. 12; Gen. 22. 3, 12.

11. The intensity of the heat of the fires of renewing grace is well symbolized in ver. 38. "Verily, verily, I say unto thee, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." John 3. 3; Gal. 6. 15; Titus 3. 5; 1 Peter 1. 23; 1 John 3. 9; 5. 18.

12. Other miracles wrought by God through his servants: "And he said: Cast it on the ground. And he cast it on the ground, and it became a serpent." Exod. 4. 3; 8. 17; 14. 26-28; Judges 7. 16-22; 14. 19; 2 Kings 2. 24.

13. Elijah here became an administrator of divine law, ver. 40. "He that sacrificeth unto any God, save unto the Lord only, he shall be utterly destroyed." Exod. 22. 20; Deut. 17. 2-5; Neh. 9. 26, 27; Isa. 65. 11-13; 1 Sam. 15. 33.

14. Here is an illustration of perfect faith in God, ver. 41. "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Heb. 11. 1; Dan. 3. 17; 6. 10; Mark 11. 22; Isa. 28. 16, with 1 Pet. 2. 6.

15. Answers to prayer are not always instantaneously granted, ver. 45. "And shall not God avenge his own elect, which cry day and night unto him, though he bear long with them." Luke 18. 7; Rev. 6. 10; Psa. 66. 10; Prov. 17. 3; 2 Cor. 12. 8, 9.

16. The Lord empowered Elijah for this daring special service, and so he will qualify you for every duty he imposes upon you, ver. 46. "And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect in weakness." 2 Cor. 12. 9; 1 Sam. 14. 6; Isa. 40. 29; Micah 3. 8; Acts 1. 8, 9.

Lessons:

1. Do you know of a broken altar of God? Repair it!

2. God has but one Church in this world, those that love him. ver. 31.

3. We each have a part to do upon the altar and the sacrifices, then God will send the fire, vers. 31-35.

4. Pray God to wonderfully manifest his glory, vers. 36, 37.

5. Faith is prophetic. Its vision is stronger than that of sight, vers. 41-44.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Notice **the time**—three years and a half after the drought began; hour of evening sacrifice, just when the offering was laid on the altar in Jerusalem.... **The place**—Carmel; the sea; brook Kishon; plain of Esdraelon; Jezreel in the distance; a word-picture.... **The persons**—people; priests; king; Elijah; were these all? One more—*God* was there! What traits did *he* show on that occasion?.... **The events**—altar; wood; offering; water; prayer; *fire;* adoration; vengeance; prayer again; rain; more word-pictures. .... **The teachings.** How should we pray, as shown in this lesson? What traits of character are we here recommended to seek?.... What in this lesson shows on what side it is best to be?

References. FREEMAN. Ver. 33: "Barrels," 308. Ver. 36: Hour of evening sacrifice, 311. Ver. 41: Sound of rain, 312. Ver. 42: Face between the knees, 313. Ver. 46: Girdle; running footmen, 314.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *God Hears Prayer.* Review last lesson. Let some child tell what the prophets of Baal were trying to do, how they acted, and how it was all in vain. Tell how long they had prayed, from morning until the middle of the afternoon. Now it was Elijah's turn. Tell how Elijah prepared the altar. First, he called all the people to come near him. He let them see all that he did. They watched with a great deal of interest. Tell how their faith in Baal had been shaken, by seeing how the prophets of Baal called upon him in vain. Now, they wanted to see if Elijah's God could hear.

ELIJAH'S PRAYER.

Tell that at three o'clock in the afternoon, the time of the evening sacrifice, Elijah prayed. Read his prayer, verses 36 and 37. He "came near." Elijah had built an altar. That was God's command. He had slain a bullock and put it upon the altar. That was also God's command. Elijah obeyed God. Now that Jesus has come, we do not have to build an altar. Jesus is the altar. We do not have to slay animals to offer upon the altar. Jesus himself is the sacrifice that God is pleased to see. If we obey God as Elijah did, we shall come to Jesus when we pray, and simply ask him to do what he has promised to do—to wash away our sins, and to keep our hearts and hands free from sinning. Teach that God is just as ready to hear the littlest child as he was to hear Elijah, and that he is sure to answer when we come to him as Elijah did—in the spirit of obedience and love.

THE LORD'S ANSWER.

Read the 38th and 39th verses. Teach that when we pray we shall not see fire fall from heaven, but if we believe God we shall feel the sweet spirit of peace fall upon our hearts. The Israelites who had been worshiping false gods, and hardly knew that there was a God in heaven, needed to see some sign with their eyes; but we who have the life of Jesus to read, and so much teaching about him, ought to be able to trust his word. Tell what was done with the prophets of Baal, and why—not as an act of vengence, but of mercy, that other people might be saved from their false teachings.

Describe Elijah on Mount Carmel watching for the rain God had promised. He believed God, and so he went to see the storm gather. When we have prayed for something, if it is something God has promised, we must look for it. Teach that such faith honors God.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

Serious, solemn hour! There is the altar of Baal, its wood and sacrifice untouched by fire. In confused groups stand the false prophets, stained with the blood-marks of their late frenzied worship. The people, looking on, wonder what next will be done. "Come near unto me," cries Elijah. The people gather about him. He is alone, the champion of a broken altar, a dishonored faith, and a neglected God. "Will he try?" ask the people. Yes, he will try. Laying stone upon stone, he raises once more the memorial of God's worship. He digs a trench about it. He arranges the wood and the sacrifice. For what does he ask? Water, four barrels, all to be poured on the altar? To be done a second time? A third time? "He is crazy as those other prophets," some one says. It is now the hour for evening sacrifice. How touching the thought! How many have met God at that hour, prophets, priests, kings, far back through the long centuries! Some of those present must have recalled days when on their housetops, in Jerusalem's courts, in far-off journeys by land or sea, they observed the hour for evening sacrifice. Elijah is now kneeling at the altar. His voice is heard in tremulous, earnest, solemn supplication to God. Such a short prayer, such a straight-going prayer to God! In contemptuous wonder, do Baal's prophets see and listen? Does Elijah really expect to do any thing with that drenched, dripping altar? But look! It is—it is, fire darting down! It fastens upon the wood, the sacrifice, and then it reaches down to the water in the trench, and with burning tongue licks it up! Wonderful sight! The old days have come back, days when God's breath went through the Red Sea, when God's hands sprinkled the sand with manna, when God's arm brought Jericho's walls to the ground! The people fall on their faces. In awe and worship they cry, "The Lord, he is the God!" What does Elijah say subsequently to Ahab? Rain coming? The drought to cease? How? They separate, Ahab going to the banquet-table, but Elijah to meet his God. The prophet is on Carmel's top. Far away, in silence, stretches the parched land. Far away, in loneliness, stretches the blue sea. Elijah prays; his servant is sent to watch the sea. Nothing there, only wave after wave. "Go again seven times," cries the prophet, bowing in prayer. That seventh time! Look off now, servant of the man of God. A little cloud; rising out of the sea, "like a man's hand." It grows, it blackens, it advances. It is the front of the dark column of the storm. How black are the heavens! How the wind turns up the sea and caps with foam the rising waves! And there are rain-drops on the dry, warm rocks? The rain thickens. It is now a driving, drenching storm. The long, long drought is hopelessly broken! Through the rain, careless of the pools that gather in the road, runs the prophet with girded loins, speeding away like a footman before Ahab's chariot, even to Jezreel.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.

This lesson illustrates the answer to prayer, or the victory of faith. First, came God's power in the consuming fire. Second, the punishment of the false prophets. Third, the mercy shown in the plenteous rain on the parched earth.

BLACKBOARD SENTENCES.

Our God is a consuming fire. Heb. 12. 29.
God is greater than man. Job 33. 12.

B. C. 907.] LESSON VIII. ELIJAH AT HOREB. [Aug. 23.

1 Kings 19. 1-18. [*Commit to memory verses* 11-13.]

1 And A'hab told Jez'e-bel all that E-li'jah had done, and withal how he had slain all the prophets with the sword.

2 Then Jez'e-bel sent a messenger unto E-li'jah, saying, So let the gods do *to me*, and more also, if I make not thy life as the life of one of them by to-morrow about this time.

3 And when he saw *that*, he arose, and went for his life, and came to Be'er-she'ba, which *belongeth* to Ju'dah, and left his servant there.

4 But he himself went a day's journey into the wilderness, and came and sat down under a juniper-tree: and he requested for himself that he might die; and said, It is enough; now, O LORD, take away my life; for I *am* not better than my fathers.

5 And as he lay and slept under a juniper-tree, behold, then an angel touched him, and said unto him, Arise *and* eat.

6 And he looked, and, behold, *there was* a cake baken on the coals, and a cruse of water at his head. And he did eat and drink, and laid him down again.

7 And the angel of the LORD came again the second time and touched him, and said, Arise *and* eat; because the journey is too great for thee.

8 And he arose, and did eat and drink, and went in the strength of that meat forty days and forty nights unto Ho'reb the mount of God.

9 And he came thither unto a cave, and lodged there; and, behold, the word of the LORD *came* to him, and he said unto him, What doest thou here, E-li'jah?

10 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Is'ra-el have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

11 And he said, Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by, and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and brake in pieces the rocks before the LORD; *but* the LORD *was* not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; *but* the LORD *was* not in the earthquake:

12 And after the earthquake a fire; *but* the LORD *was* not in the fire: and after the fire a still small voice.

13 And it was *so*, when E-li'jah heard *it*, that he wrapped his face in his mantle, and went out, and stood in the entering in of the cave. And, behold, *there came* a voice unto him, and said, What doest thou here, E-li'jah?

14 And he said, I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: because the children of Is'ra-el have forsaken thy covenant, thrown down thine altars, and slain thy prophets with the sword; and I, *even* I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away.

15 And the LORD said unto him, Go, return on thy way to the wilderness of Da-mas'cus: and when thou comest, anoint Haz'a-el *to be* king over Syr'i-a:

16 And Je'hu the son of Nim'shi shalt thou anoint *to be* over Is'ra-el: and E-li'sha the son of Sha'phat, of A'bel-me-ho'lah, shalt thou anoint *to be* prophet in thy room.

17 And it shall come to pass, *that* him that escapeth the sword of Haz'a-el shall Je'hu slay: and him that escapeth from the sword of Je'hu shall E-li'sha slay.

18 Yet I have left *me* seven thousand in Is'ra-el all the knees which have not bowed unto Ba'al, and every mouth which hath not kissed him.

General Statement.

Twelve hours only intervened between Elijah at the summit of majesty and Elijah at the depth of humiliation; between Elijah giving the law to Israel, slaying the enemies of God, commanding the king, and Elijah flying from the post of duty at a woman's threat. After a day of excitement and tension came a day of exhaustion and weakness. He saw himself again left alone, not a hand lifted to protect him from Jezebel's hate. In a moment of fear he fled, and paused not even upon the edge of the desert, but plunged into the waste, fearing its desolation less than his fellow-man. God dealt with him in more than a mother's tenderness, strengthening his wasted strength by food, refreshing his overwrought brain by sleep, calming his stormy soul by the influences of nature, leading him through the scenery of that wilderness in which his ancestors had passed a generation. At the same mountain, perhaps in the same cleft of the rock, where Moses met God, and saw the divine glory pass before him, Elijah heard a strange, still voice, which to his prophet's ear, attuned to the subtle harmonies of the Spirit, was the voice of God. Reverently he listened to its question, and strove to answer it with excuses for his conduct. The Almighty does not even rebuke him for his recreancy—that his own awakened conscience had already done. But God gave him what he needed—work to occupy his mind and body, encouragement to show him that he had not lived in vain, since seven thousand souls were still loyal to the truth, and companionship with one who should carry on his work when he should have passed away. With spirit strengthened by the revelation, the prophet goes back once more to his forsaken field.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 1. Ahab told Jezebel. Perhaps in the hope of winning her over to the side of the reform; perhaps because already he felt the power of her will over his own. **All that Elijah had done.** The sacrifice, the slaughter of the priests, and the prayer for rain. **Slain all the prophets.** The slaughter of the Baalite prophets was the act which roused all the fierceness of Jezebel's nature.

2. Then Jezebel. She was a Zidonian, the daughter of a king, and proud, determined, and unscrupulous in character. That all the nation had in an hour changed sides from Baal to Jehovah did not influence her a particle. She resolved to stand her ground, to oppose reform, and to strike down at one blow her great enemy Elijah. **Sent a messenger.** In the intensity of her rage, and in her confidence of power, she was scarcely cautious; or her purpose may have been to drive him out of the city by her threat. **So let the gods do.** A form of vow, which was supposed to point to utter destruction, like the modern utterances of profanity. **Thy life as the life.** A warning that if he remained in the country he should suffer the fate which he had meted out to others. (1) *How often the wicked plan and proclaim, as if there were no God in the world!*

3. When he saw that. Saw that the queen, who was the power behind the throne, had resolved to oppose the reform; that the king had yielded to her irresistible influence; and that the people, who but yesterday had proclaimed their allegiance to God, were now submissive to her will; he felt that his efforts had been vain, and that the cause of God was utterly lost. **He arose, and went for his life.** He was hopeless, and fearful, in the revulsion of his feelings, after the seeming triumph of yesterday to the seeming failure of to-day; and he forgot that God could care for both his cause and his prophet. **Came to Beer-sheba.** Nearly 100 miles south of Jezreel, on the borders of the wilderness, in the extreme south of the territory of Judah. He must have required two days to reach it, even if he traveled all night. **Belongeth to Judah.** Originally to Simeon (Josh. 19. 2), but afterward absorbed by the more powerful tribe. **Left his servant.** Perhaps because he was unable to journey further. (2) *Strength and weakness lie close together in the characters of great men.*

4. Went a day's journey. He did not dare to remain in the territory of Judah, because its king was on terms of friendship and alliance with Ahab, and might deliver him up to death. **Into the wilderness.** The bleak, gravelly desert, now called *et Tih*. **Under a juniper-tree.** More likely the broom, a shrub found in the Sinaitic wilderness. **Requested . . . that he might die.** Suffering from the reaction of an intense excitement; weary from his long journey; in need of companionship, food, and sleep; feeling that his work has been a failure, and smitten with conviction of his own unworthiness, in flying from the post of duty; he longs for death. All this story is in accordance with the deepest principles of mental and physical science. **I am not better than my fathers.** Conscience upbraids him for his own unfaithfulness, cowardice, and irresolution; and he judges himself sternly, and decides that he is not worthy of living. (3) *How fortunate it is for us that God does not always answer our mistaken prayers!*

5. Slept under a juniper-tree. God gently supplies

the needs of his physical nature before dealing with the moral aspects of his conduct. **An angel touched him.** A divine messenger, sent from heaven, comes to minister to him. So God dealt with his people, in ancient days, in that very desert, and so, though invisibly, he deals with us still. **Arise and eat.** God supports him, and provides for him, for God has yet great work for him to do. (4) *How often have God's people found their needs met by his care!*

6. A cake, baken on the coals. It is not necessary to suppose that he saw a fire, and the cake baking in its embers; but only that he saw a cake of a kind which is baked. Whether prepared by the angel, or dropped in the desert by some wanderer, we cannot tell. **A cruse of water.** A jar or bottle. **At his head.** Literally, "at his pillow," which may have been a stone, or the sand, or his garment rolled up. **Eat and drink.** He took the food, in a dazed, half-awake consciousness, ate, and then lay down to sleep once more; for sleep was his greatest need.

7, 8. The second time. "Eat a second time, for otherwise the journey will be too great for thee," is the meaning of the passage. **Went in the strength.** Endowed with preternatural strength from the food furnished by God, he was able to make the journey. (5) *How like the Bread of Life, sent down from heaven!* **That meat.** *Food* would be a better translation for our time. **Forty days and forty nights.** Horeb was only thirteen days' journey, but the entire time spent at the mountain may be included. In the same region Moses passed the same length of time without food, and some have thought that the temptation of Christ was in this desert. This was perhaps to show Elijah that God could support him even without earthly means, and thereby to strengthen his faith. **Horeb the mount of God.** This is probably the same peak elsewhere called Sinai, and supposed to be the mountain now known as *Ras Sufsafeh*, in the southern part of the peninsula. It is called "the mount of God," because there God showed himself to Moses, and revealed his law to the Israelites.

9. Unto a cave. Literally, "unto *the* cave," that is, some well-known cave, perhaps the "cleft of the rock" in which Moses saw the Lord. Exod. 32. 22. **Lodged there.** Passed the night there. **Word of the Lord.** Perhaps God's revelation was made in a vision during the night. **What doest thou here?** *Thou*, called to be a leader of God's host, hiding from enemies; *here*, when the post of duty is in Israel. It was a question of tenderness, yet of rebuke. (6) *God sees where his servants are, and knows their true state.* (7) *He who is found out of his place in God's plan must render an account of himself.*

10. And he said. Elijah's answer shows a spirit of petulance, finding fault not only with his people, but also with God. It is in some degree a defense of his conduct in fleeing from his land. **Very jealous.** Not for his own glory or interest, but for the Lord's cause. **Children of Israel.** The reference is to the ten tribes, but it is equally true of Judah. **Forsaken thy covenant.** They were a covenant people, pledged to the service of God and enjoying his special care; but they had broken their vows. **Thrown down thine altars.** After the separation from Judah, altars had been erected in various places for the worship of such as could not go to Jerusalem. **Slain thy prophets.** Jezebel had led in the persecution, but the people had not resisted her acts, and were therefore held responsible. **I, even I only.** Elijah felt always a sense of loneliness, and more than once spoke of it. There were other followers of God, but he needed to be assured of them.

11. Go forth. Perhaps the design of the revelation which followed was to show Elijah that God's presence and his power were not always manifested through startling events. Elijah needed to learn that the invisible forces of nature are as full of God as those which seem greater. **Wind rent the mountains.** This had been Elijah's way of reformation for Israel; but God had a better way. **The Lord was not in the wind.** The true glory of God is not in overpowering majesty, but in his attributes of love and mercy.

12. A still small voice. Literally, "a sound of soft stillness." Just the gentle, peaceful, comforting voice needed by his wounded heart. To him it was rest and consolation—perhaps nothing more; but to us, favored by further revelation, it lights up the fact that "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." John 1. 17.

13, 14. Heard it. His prophet's insight enabled him to recognize the voice of God, and he humbly waited for its revelation. **Dropped his face.** The holiest of men is afraid to look upon the glory of God. **His mantle.** Probably a cloak of untanned sheepskin. **Stood.** The posture of service and submission. **There came a voice.** Perhaps not audible, but a clearly supernatual impression upon his spiritual sense. **What doest thou here?** See notes on verses 9, 10.

15. And the Lord said. Three things God gave to Elijah in this interview: 1.) A purpose in life, some definite work to occupy him, and save him from brooding. 2.) Companionship, by having a disciple and successor. 3.) Assurance that he had not lived in vain, since seven thousand were still faithful. **Go, return on thy way.** (8) *Active service is the best cure for discouragement.* **To the wilderness of Damascus.** The country between Bashan and Damascus, not far from the prophet's home, Gilead. **Anoint.** Perhaps this word is not to be taken literally, but means "appoint," or "set apart." **Hazael.** He was the general under Ben-hadad II., king of Damascus; and not long after this he slew his master, succeeded him as king, and became a scourge to punish Israel. **Syria.** The country north of Israel, between the Lebanon range and the desert; constantly at war with Israel for the supremacy of the lands between Egypt and the Euphrates.

16. Jehu. A general under Ahab, who was destined to slay his son and obtain his throne. **Son of Nimshi.** Nimshi was Jehu's grandfather (2 Kings 9. 20), but was perhaps more famous than his son, who was Jehu's father. **Shalt thou anoint.** Neither of these two commissions were, as far as we know, fulfilled by Elijah personally. See 2 Kings 8. 7–15, and 9. 1–3. But they were prepared for by him and at the right time were accomplished under his successor. **Elisha the son of Shaphat.** He was a young farmer of the Jordan valley, utterly unlike Elijah, yet precisely adapted to carry on the work which he had begun. **Abel-meholah.** "The meadow of the dance;" an unknown place in the northern part of the valley of the Jordan. **Prophet in thy room.** This was not a displacement of Elijah, for he continued in office for several years; but it was a promise of a companion and helper who should carry on his work after his own departure.

17. The sword of Hazael. He afterward conquered nearly all of Israel's territory, and slew many of its people, and carried others into captivity. 2 Kings 8. 12; 13. 3. **Shall Jehu slay.** He slew the whole house of Ahab, and all the leaders of the Baal-worshiping element. 2 Kings 10. 17. 23-25. **Shall Elisha slay.** Not with the sword, but with his prophetic utterances, which pronounced their doom, as in Hos. 6. 5.

18. Yet I have left. The Revised Version changes this into "I will leave;" meaning that out of all the slaughter the "seven thousand" faithful ones should be exempt, as a remnant to transmit the truth to coming generations. **Seven thousand.** A round number, symbolic of completeness, and showing that Elijah was not alone in God's service. (9) *God knows better than we how many are his followers.* **Knees which have not bowed.** The worshipers of God stood at his altar; the idolaters bowed and fell prostrate before theirs. **Kissed him.** Idolaters kissed the image, sometimes on the face, and sometimes on the feet.

HOME READINGS.

M. Elijah at Horeb. 1 Kings 19. 1–18.
Tu. Moses's request for death. Num. 11. 10–23.
W. Moses's fast. Exod. 34. 23–35.
Th. The fasting of Christ. Matt. 4. 1–11.
F. The voice of God. Matt. 3. 13–17.
S. The power of his voice. Psa. 68. 28–35.
S. Forsaken by his people. Psa. 69. 1–18.

GOLDEN TEXT.

And after the fire a still small voice. 1 Kings 19. 12.

LESSON HYMN. S. M.

Hymnal, No. 287.

Blest Comforter divine,
Let rays of heavenly love
Amid our gloom and darkness shine,
And point our souls above.

Turn us with gentle voice
From every sinful way,
And bid the mourning saint rejoice,
Though earthly joys decay.

By thine inspiring breath
Make every cloud of care,
And e'en the gloomy vale of death,
A smile of glory wear.

TIME.—B. C. 907, immediately following the last lesson.

PLACES.—1. Beer-sheba, in the south of Judah; 2. Mount Horeb, in the Sinaitic wilderness; 3. Damascus, the capital of Syria; 4. Abel-meholah, in the Jordan valley.

RULERS.—See Lesson IV.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION—Personal communion with God.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. The Flight, v. 1-8.
From whom did Elijah flee, and why?
How do you account for his sudden fear?
What prayer did he offer?
What state of mind did this disclose?
What occurred by the juniper-tree?
Where did he go?

2. The Vision, v. 9-14.
What did the Lord say to him?
What was his answer?
Was this excuse valid?
How was Elijah affected by the various manifestations?
What was their significance?

3. The Command, v. 15-18.
What did the Lord direct him to do?
Did God answer his foolish prayer?
Who was appointed to succeed him?
What prophecy was uttered? ver. 17.
How did God show him his mistake?

Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. The mistake of attempting to escape duty?
2. The mistake of foolish prayer?
3. The mistake of supposing that we only are serving the Lord?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. The Flight, v. 1-8.
What news came to Jezebel?
What threatening message was sent to Elijah?
Where did the prophet retire for safety?
What was his prayer in the wilderness?
Who appeared to him?
What was the angel's command?
What strength was given the prophet?

2. The Vision, v. 9-14.
What befell the prophet in the cave?
What complaint did Elijah make to the Lord?
What was he bidden to do?
What did he hear?
How did Elijah acknowledge the voice?
What question was asked him?
Why was the prophet discouraged?

3. The Command, v. 15-18.
Where was Elijah told to go?
What two kings was the prophet to anoint?
What prophet should succeed him?
What comforting assurance did the Lord give Elijah?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where are we taught in this lesson—

1. That God is nearest us in our greatest needs?
2. That the Lord knows and numbers his people?
3. That the righteous are held in divine remembrance?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

How did Jezebel feel when she heard what had been done? **She was so angry that she swore by all her gods to kill Elijah.**

Was Elijah bold when he heard of it? **No, he was so afraid that he ran away to Beer-sheba.**

Leaving his servant at Beer-sheba, where did he go? **A day's journey into the desert, and sat down under a little tree.**

He was so sad, what did he ask God? **To let him die.**

As he lay and slept, who touched him? **An angel, who said, "Arise, and eat!"**

What could Elijah find to eat in a desert? **He looked, and there was a cake baken on the coals, and some water.**

After he had eaten and drank, what did he do? **Laid down again under the tree, and again the angel touched him.**

What did he say this time? **"Arise and eat, for you have a long journey to take."**

In the strength of this food how long did he walk? **Forty days, until he came to Mount Horeb, and hid himself in a cave.**

The next morning what did the voice of the Lord say to him? **"What doest thou here, Elijah?"**

After Elijah had told the Lord all his trouble, what did he tell him to do? **"Go and stand upon the top of the mountain."**

As Elijah stood there, what did God send? **A great strong wind that tore the mountain and broke the rocks.**

After the wind, what? **An earthquake, which shook the ground.**

What after the earthquake? **A fire.**

Did Elijah hear God's voice in the whirlwind, the earthquake, or the fire? **Not in either.** [Repeat GOLDEN TEXT.]

As Elijah hid his face in his robe and listened, what did he hear? **"What doest thou here, Elijah?"**

What did God tell him to do? **"Go back to Damascus, anoint two kings, and Elisha to be a prophet."**

How many did God say there were in Israel who loved and worshiped him? **More than seven thousand.**

Words with Little People.

If you will watch and listen for God's "*still small voice*" it will direct and keep your little feet in the way that leads to the Better Country. You may hear it in his blessed word as you read it or hear it read; and it is that little voice inside which tells you what is right, and not to do the wrong. The longer you listen for it the easier it will be to hear it, and the oftener you obey it the sweeter it will sound. No angel from heaven could guide you better.

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. What did Jezebel threaten to do? **Kill Elijah.**

2. What happened to Elijah as he lay sleeping under the juniper-tree? **"An angel touched him."**

3. What did the angel bid him do? **"Arise, and eat."**

4. How long did Elijah subsist on what he ate and drank under the juniper-tree? **"Forty days and forty nights."**

5. Whom did the Lord tell Elijah to anoint prophet in his room? **Elisha.**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

God's Dealing with Elijah.

I. THE HIDING.
1. *Unto a cave.* v. 9.
"Thou hast been a shelter for me." Psa. 61. 3.
2. *Lodged there.* v. 9.
"I will....lay me down in peace and sleep." Psa. 4. 8.
3. *Word of the Lord came.* v. 9.
"Blessed is the man that heareth." Prov. 8. 34.
4. *What doest thou here?* v. 9.
"Wherefore didst thou doubt." Matt. 14. 31.

II. THE PLEA.
1. *I have been very jealous.* v. 10, 14.
"Thou knowest that I love thee." John 21. 15-17.
2. *Israel...forsaken thy covenant.* v. 10, 14.
"Like sheep have gone astray." Isa. 53. 6.
3. *Thrown down thine altars.* v. 10, 14.
"Have forgotten the Lord their God." Jer. 3. 21.
4. *Slain thy prophets.* v. 10, 14.
"We are counted as sheep for the slaughter." Psa. 44. 22.
5. *They seek my life.* v. 10, 14.
"They hate me with cruel hatred." Psa. 25. 19.

III. The Manifestation.
1. *The Lord passed by.* v. 11.
"Will make myself known unto him." Num. 12. 6.
2. *A great and strong wind.* v. 11.
"Let not....the mighty glory in his might." Jer. 9. 23.
3. *The Lord was not in the wind.* v. 11.
"Not by might nor by power." Zech. 4. 6.
4. *A still small voice.* v. 12.
"Sweet is thy voice." Song of Sol. 2. 14.
5. *Elijah heard it.* v. 13.
"For they know his voice." John 10. 4.
6. *What doest thou here?* v. 13.
"Be not weary in well-doing." 2 Thess. 3. 13.

IV. The Command.
1. *Go, return on thy way.* v. 15.
"Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might." Eccl. 9. 10.
2. *Anoint Hazael....and Jehu.* v. 15, 16.
"God ruleth in the kingdom of men." Dan. 5. 21.
3. *Elisha....in thy room.* v. 16.
"Giveth it to whomsoever he will." Dan. 4. 17.

V. The Promise.
1. *Shall come to pass.* v. 17.
"I the Lord have said." Num. 14. 35.
2. *Shall....slay.* v. 17.
"Vengeance belongeth unto me." Heb. 10. 30.
3. *I have left....seven thousand.* v. 18.
"He knoweth them that trust in him." Nah. 1. 7.
4. *Not bowed unto Baal.* v. 18.
"Be thou faithful unto death." Rev. 2. 10.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

Spiritual Depression.

1. The greatest and best of men are apt to have seasons of discouragement when they are sorely troubled by temptations. v. 1–3.

2. The causes of spiritual depression are partly physical, partly mental, and partly in the surroundings. Elijah was worn out with labor, overwhelmed by trouble, and encompassed with danger, and his spirit sank, v. 1–3.

3. God deals gently with his servants in their discouragement, not answering their unwise prayers, not rebuking them for unfaithfulness, but caring for them, watching over them, and supplying their needs. v. 4–8.

4. We can bring our deepest troubles to the Lord, and tell him all our griefs, assured that he will listen to us. v. 9, 10.

5. A remedy for spiritual depression is found in spiritual work. He who labors for God will be lifted up to peace. v. 15–18.

English Teacher's Notes.

The subject of this lesson is unusually long and full, and the teacher ought to have no difficulty in making it interesting to the class. The simplest view that can be taken of it is one which at once excites sympathy. We see here

A discouraged man, and how God dealt with him. Who does not know what it is to be discouraged? The child who finds its daily lesson difficult to master, and sees itself outstripped by companions with quicker comprehension or better memory, knows. The girl who tries hard to curb her temper, but is over and over again overcome by it, knows. The youth who finds his employer hard and exacting knows. The woman who has sought to do a kindness, but finds her offers rejected, knows. The man who is seeking to free himself from the bondage of evil habits knows. And each person is tempted to think that no one else has experienced just the same feeling, and that he stands alone in his dejection. But the passage for to-day shows us a man, if possible, more downcast, more despairing than most who have suffered in this way. And the man is no obscure individual, no weak-minded person, no mere waif or stray among his fellow-creatures. He is a "prophet of the Lord," and his divine mission has just been attested in the most wonderful and striking manner. He has stood forth as a witness for Jehovah, and Jehovah has honored his faith. Last Sunday we saw him grand, undaunted, and triumphant; to-day we see him sunk into the lowest depth of depression.

Look at him as he sits under the juniper-tree—the white flowering shrub called Rethem by the Arabs—resting beneath its shade after his hurried flight from Jezreel. But a short time ago we saw him alone by the brook of Cherith; there he could stay a year contented and peaceful; here he is longing to get rid of the burden of life. What has made such a difference in him? Just this: he has gone astray from that which was the rule of his life. He went to the brook Cherith "according to the word of the Lord." He has come here according to his own mind. No wonder all things are wrong with him!

But is his dejection altogether wrong? Not altogether: for look at the subject of it—"I am no better than my fathers? He had hoped to be the instrument of turning the Israelites back to the Lord their God. But his hopes are defeated. With their lips they acknowledged Jehovah, but their hearts and their ways are unchanged. He is right to mourn over this. But there is self, and there is want of faith mingled with it—"they seek my life to take it away." Ver. 10. They had done this before, and God had preserved him. Now that he has been seeking to save his own life it has become a burden.

The girl who is dejected because she has failed to curb her temper is right in part—right to mourn over the sin. But perhaps there may be mingled with it the mortification of failure. The effort may have been made in her own strength instead of in simple dependence on the Lord. It is the burdens we choose to carry for ourselves which prove too heavy, and weigh us down. But I have not space to enlarge on this point. We must go on to see

How the Lord dealt with this discouraged man. He thought he was of no more good in the world. The Lord did not think so. An angel has come down from heaven to supply his immediate wants. He is sleeping wearily after his sad journey. But he must be fed, lest he might perish with hunger. There is the angel to wake him, and there is the food ready. Tender watch is kept over him, and all needful provision made for him. Not until his body has been strengthened, and his mind had time to recover in some measure its balance, does the searching question come to him: "What doest thou here, Elijah?"

This question finds him at Horeb, far away from the place where his work lies, in the lonely desert, amid the grand surroundings of the spot where the law has been given to Israel. Although he had started without divine direction, no doubt the hand of the Lord guided him hither. Though he had taken a false step, he was not left to his own way. And here, to this one lonely, dejected man, the Lord

gives a sight of his wonders. The wind, the earthquake, the fire, come one after the other to teach him. And then the "still small voice" bids him go forth again on the Lord's errand, gives him a commission to those who are to be the instruments of chastisement for rebellious Israel, and comforts him with the prospect of a prophet to take his place and follow up his work, and with the assurance that there are yet hearts in Israel truly loyal to Jehovah.

Thus the Lord provided for, guided, taught, and comforted his discouraged servant, and, instead of casting him aside as useless, sent him forth on fresh work.

The discouraged boy or girl in the present day may behold no wonders such as Elijah saw at Horeb. But what does that matter? The Lord was not in the wind, nor in the earthquake, nor in the fire. It was when the "still small voice" spoke that Elijah recognized the Lord's presence. And this voice may be heard by the most troubled, the most wretched, the most erring. The message may vary for each one; but assuredly this will be a part of it: "Hear, and your soul shall live;" "Come unto me, . . . and I will give you rest." Isa. 55. 3; Matt. 11. 28.

Bible Reading Lesson Analysis.

Elijah at Horeb. 1 Kings 19. 1–18.

1. Under these circumstances of trial how fortunate it would have been for Ahab if Jezebel had been a wife "from the Lord!" ver. 1. "A prudent wife is from the Lord." Prov. 19. 14; Gen. 24. 3; 28. 1; Prov. 31. 10, 12; 1 Cor. 14. 34.

2. Might the character of Jezebel have been as: "Entreat me not to leave thee, or to return from following after thee: for whither thou goest, I will go: and where thou lodgest, I will lodge; thy people shall be my people, and thy God my God." Ruth 1. 16; 1 Sam. 25. 3; Esth. 2. 15-17; Luke 1. 6; 1 Pet. 3. 9.

3. Other oaths equally impulsive, rash, unwarranted, ver. 2. "God do so and more also to me, if the head of Elisha the son of Shaphat shall stand on him this day." 2 Kings 6. 31; Gen. 25. 33; Judges 11. 30, 31; Matt. 14. 7; Acts 23. 21.

4. Elijah forgot to consult God before fleeing, ver. 3. "Hide not thy face far from me; put not thy servant away in anger: thou hast been my help; leave me not, neither forsake me, O God of my salvation." Psa. 27. 9; Isa. 51. 3, 12; Deut. 33. 27; 2 Cor. 1. 4, 6; John 14. 18.

5. Elijah's faith in God wavering for a moment he became discouraged, ver. 4. "And what the land is, whether it be fat or lean, whether there be wood therein or not. And be ye of good courage, and bring of the fruit of the land." Num. 13. 20; Deut. 31. 6; Josh. 1. 6, 7, 9, 18; Jer. 1. 8; Ezek. 3. 9.

6. Other appearances of God to man using the same instrumentality, ver. 5. "And I heard a man's voice between the banks of Ulai, which called, and said, Gabriel, make this man to understand the vision. Dan. 8. 16; Gen. 18. 19; Matt. 1. 20; Acts 12. 7.

7. In Elijah's depressed condition God first cared for his body, giving it sleep and food. The man in a worn-out body is without opportunity, vers. 5–8. "So he giveth his beloved sleep." Psa. 127. 2; Neh. 9. 21; 2 Kings 4. 42; Matt. 14. 15–21; Gen. 9. 3.

8. Elijah's continued faithfulness to God proved by his prompt obedience, ver. 8. "Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine." Exod. 19. 5; Gen. 6. 22; Psa. 119. 16; Matt. 1. 24; Acts 26. 19.

9. The purpose of divinely appointed fasting was disciplinary, God's way of ordering man to reflect, ver. 8. "When I wept and chastened my soul with fasting, that was my reproach." Psa. 69, 10; Isa. 58. 6, 7; Matt. 4. 1, 2; Exod. 34. 28, 29; Deut. 9. 9, 18.

10. Study closely God's way of working his will in changing men's hearts, vers. 9–13. "And it shall come to pass, while my glory passeth by, that I will put thee in a cleft of the rock, and will cover thee with my hand while I pass by." Exod. 33. 22; Matt. 16. 24; John 6. 44; Psa. 78. 34; 51. 8–13.

11. An accurate and impressive description of degenerate Israel, ver. 10. "Now these things were our examples, to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted." 1 Cor. 10. 6; Isa. 24. 5; 65. 3–7; 1 Kings 18. 4; Matt. 23. 37, 38.

12. God accomplishes the profoundest changes in human character not by manifestations of terror, but of tenderness, vers. 11. 12. "And they said one to another, we are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul, when he besought us, and we would not hear." Gen. 42. 21; 1 Cor. 1. 12; 1 John 3. 21; John 3. 16; Deut. 7. 7, 8.

13. Like his Master, the minister is more effective with loving persuasion than with bitter denunciation. "For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strongholds." 2 Cor. 10. 4; 1 Tim. 1. 18, 19; Rom. 1. 16; Matt. 22. 37-39; Mark 12. 33.

14. Despondency in religion is a sign of sloth. Hard work for God will scatter it, vers. 13–17. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not." Gal. 6. 9; Luke 2. 49; Eph. 4. 28; Num. 25. 13; Prov. 22. 13.

15. It was Elisha's tenderness and not Elijah's sword that won reformation in Israel, ver. 16. "Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth." Rev. 2. 16; Psa. 37. 30; Prov. 10. 31; Isa. 11. 4; 49. 2.

Lessons:

1. God cannot use in his cause a discouraged man. Usually discouragement flows from disappointed pride.

2. We should never swerve from duty till God in conscience commands it.

3. God will never allow his children to break down. The supporting angel will always appear at the right time.

4. God respects the body as the home of the soul. Practically, our bodies are no small part of ourselves.

5. God is love, not fire; he is tenderness, not terror; peace, not a sword.

6. If a man run away from God and duty, to secure pardon, he must return to God and to still harder service.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

Call forth from the class a description of Elijah on Carmel, in power and triumph, as shown in the last lesson. ....Draw a sketch-map of Palestine and the Sinaitic wilderness, and locate on it, Carmel, Samaria, Jerusalem, Beer-sheba, Mount Horeb or Sinai....Indicate the journey of Elijah, and tell its story, to the "day's journey into the wilderness"....Show the traits and sins involved in this sudden change in Elijah's conduct; its cowardice, unfaithfulness, distrust of God, etc.... Present the causes which led to it, in 1.) Want of occupation; 2.) Nervous exhaustion, mind sympathizing with body; 3.) Loneliness; 4.) Apparent failure.... Trace the journey still further to Mount Horeb, and relate God's dealing with Elijah....What were the tasks given to Elijah?....How did God's revelation and the duties assigned to Elijah relieve his spiritual trouble?....How does this lesson teach us, 1.) The causes of spiritual depression? 2.) The cure for spiritual depression....If the teacher will read the remarkable sermon by F. W. Robertson on "Elijah," he will find many thoughts in it which can be used in teaching.

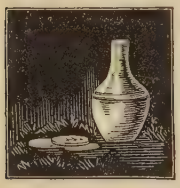
References. FREEMAN. Ver. 4: Day's journey, 315. Ver. 6: Bread making, 11. Ver. 4: The "cruse," 266. Ver. 13: Covering the face. 316. Ver. 18: Baal, 184. Ver. 18: Kissing, as an act of homage, 427.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *God Talks with His Children.* It may be well to let the children tell the story of previous lessons. Let one tell of the famine, who sent it,

why it was sent, etc. Another might tell where Elijah stayed, why he was obliged to hide, and how long he remained hidden. Call upon another to describe the meeting between Ahab and Elijah, and let another tell of the scene on Mount Carmel. The teacher may need to help the children in bringing out the important points, but such a course will stimulate interest and attention on the part of the children. To be taught: 1.) That losing faith in God makes us afraid. 2.) That God remembers us when we forget him. 3.) That God never leaves his children alone.

1. Tell the story of Ahab's return to his home after the scene on Mount Carmel. There is room for vivid word-picturing here—Ahab's shame over the defeat of Baal's prophets; Jezebel's rage; the threatening message to Elijah; the sudden fear and flight, and the prayer for death. Elijah had forgotten that God is stronger than all kings and queens, and that he will carry out his purposes, no matter who may oppose. Teach that God takes care of those who are trying to obey him, and the child who is obedient need never fear any thing.



2. Teach that God did not forget Elijah, and that he never forgets us, even though we forget him. Show some of the ways in which God proved his thought for Elijah: First, he sent him sweet sleep. Then an angel came and touched him, and told him to get up and eat. There was food ready for him to eat, and water to drink. Then Elijah rested again, and again the angel fed him, and his strength came back to him. Show that God shows his care for us in giving food and sleep and good friends, even when we do not care for him, and that such a Friend deserves our love.

3. Let children name the proofs that God thought about Elijah, and print them on the board, one above the other. Tell them that there is still another. Print above the others, "God spoke to Elijah." Tell the story, and ask if God ever speaks to his children now. Tell of ways in which God speaks, and teach that as he did not leave Elijah alone, so he never leaves his children alone now. "I only am left," Elijah said. God said, "No, there are seven thousand who worship me." Teach that faith in God makes us full of hope and courage.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

A rough, wild land, and the lonely sky shuts down drearily on this lonely land. Only one man can be seen, weary, disheartened, a hunted life. The fugitive wanders carelessly about. The heat may oppress him. There is a juniper-tree. He will crawl into its shade. He is hungry. He is thirsty. Would that he might lie down and never rise again! He sleeps, and lo, an angel bends over the poor wanderer and touches him. He shows him food, "a cake baken on the coals." He shows him water, "a cruse at his head." It comes again, that pitying angel-face, that soft angel-touch. From that hour of courage and hope, he journeys to Horeb. He steals into a shadowy, silent cave, his home in the wild mountain-region. But the word of the Lord summons him: "Go forth and stand upon the mount before the Lord." And now what a wind! It howls through the gorges. It breaks the trees of the forest. It crashes over the mountain-summit. It rends "in pieces the rocks before the Lord." Is not God in that mighty wind? He is not there, and it dies away. And now an earthquake. It rumbles and shakes and shatters and roars. Is not God in that strong earthquake? He is not there, and it dies away. And now a fire, flaming and dazzling. Is not this his glory? It fades away, for he is not here. It is still around Horeb. A great, awful hush has come after wind, earthquake, and fire. Not a leaf seems to stir or gentlest wind to blow, but it is a solemn pause, absolute silence. Suddenly, through it all, sounds a voice, so soft a voice, "a still small voice!" It reaches the ear and the soul of the prophet. "It is God!" he says. He covers his face with his mantle. In awe, he stands "in the entering in of the cave."

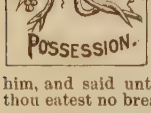
Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.

EXPLANATION. Elijah's zeal, which heretofore has been burning brightly, now becomes faint and dim. He becomes discouraged and weak, just as you and I do every once in a while. But God is a God of mercy and great love. He will fill our feeble lamps with the oil of grace, and he will feed and strengthen you and me just as willingly as he did Elijah. "A bruised reed shall he not break, and smoking flax shall he not quench." Listen for the still small voice that will direct us, each one, in the path of duty.

B. C. 900.] **LESSON IX. THE STORY OF NABOTH.** **[Aug. 30.**

1 Kings 21. 4-19. [*Commit to memory verses* 17–19.]



4 And A'hab came into his house heavy and displeased because of the word which Na'both the Jez're-el-ite had spoken to him: for he had said, I will not give thee the inheritance of my fathers. And he laid him down upon his bed, and turned away his face, and would eat no bread.

5 But Jez'e-bel his wife came to him, and said unto him, Why is thy spirit so sad, that thou eatest no bread?

6 And he said unto her, Because I spake unto Na'both the Jez're-el-ite, and said unto him, Give me thy vineyard for money; or else, if it please thee, I will give thee *another* vineyard for it: and he answered, I will not give thee my vineyard.

7 And Jez'e-bel his wife said unto him, Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Is'ra-el? arise, *and* eat bread, and let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard of Na'both the Jez're-el-ite.

8 So she wrote letters in A'hab's name, and sealed *them* with his seal, and sent the letters unto the elders and to the nobles that *were* in his city dwelling with Na'both.

9 And she wrote in the letters, saying, Proclaim a fast, and set Na-both on high among the people:

10 And set two men, sons of Be'li-al, before him, to bear witness against him, saying, Thou didst blaspheme God and the king. And *then* carry him out, and stone him, that he may die.

11 And the men of his city, *even* the elders and the nobles who were the inhabitants in his city, did as Jez'e-bel had sent unto them, *and* as it *was* written in the letters which she had sent unto him;

12 They proclaimed a fast, and set Na-both on high among the people.

13 And there came in two men, children of Be'li-al, and sat before him: and the men of Be'li-al witnessed against him, *even* against Na'both, in the presence of the people, saying, Na'both did blaspheme God and the king. Then they carried him forth out of the city, and stoned him with stones, that he died.

14 Then they sent to Jez'e-bel, saying, Na'both is stoned, and is dead.

15 And it came to pass, when Jez'e-bel heard that Na'both was stoned, and was dead, that Jez'e-bel said to A'hab, Arise, take possession of the vineyard of Na'both the Jez're-el-ite, which he refused to give thee for money: for Na'both is not alive, but dead.

16 And it came to pass, when A'hab heard that Na'both was dead, that A'hab rose up to go down to the vineyard of Na'both the Jez're-el-ite to take possession of it.

17 And the word of the LORD came to E-li'jah the Tish'bite, saying,

18 Arise, go down to meet A'hab king of Is'ra-el, which *is* in Sa-ma'ri-a: behold, *he is* in the vineyard of Na'both, whither he is gone down to possess it.

19 And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, Hast thou killed, and also taken possession? And thou shalt speak unto him, saying, Thus saith the LORD, In the place where dogs licked the blood of Na'both shall dogs lick thy blood, even thine.

General Statement.

From the many crimes of Ahab and Jezebel one is selected as a typical case, though not more wicked than many others. The king of Israel, from his palace windows on the wall of Jezreel, looks upon a vineyard along the terraced hill-side. He desires to add it to the royal domain by purchase, but his offer is rejected by its owner, who in the spirit of Israelitish fidelity to the customs of the fathers, refuses to alienate the estate from his family. The king receives his refusal in the spirit of a sulky child, and lies down angry upon his couch. But Jezebel, always equal to circumstances, always defiant of men, at once forms a plan for the possession of the desired vineyard. She resolves upon the murder of Naboth, and makes his own towns-people her accomplices. A fast is proclaimed, as if a curse lay upon the land, which must be removed by religious services, and the punishment of the guilty. Naboth is summoned before the elders of his town to answer an accusation, and in presence of all the people two men stand forth and declare that they heard him blaspheme God and his king. The sentence is declared, and an innocent man, with his innocent children, is dragged forth to death. The next day dawns, and Ahab stands upon the vineyard exulting in his possession, when suddenly a strange but well-known form is seen striding toward him. The king glances upon the intruder, and turns pale. "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" starts from his ashen lips. He is answered by a curse from the God of Israel, and a warning that he, too, shall lie where the body of Naboth lies, in a deeper, because deserved, shame.

Explanatory and Practical Notes.

Verse 4. Ahab came. From an interview with the independent land-owner, Naboth. **Into his house.** The royal palace, which stood close by the wall of Jezreel, overlooking the field of Naboth. **Heavy and displeased.** (1) *The man who thinks only of his own interests and lives only for his own pleasure will have many miserable hours.* **Naboth the Jezreelite.** He was an honest, sturdy citizen, who had dared to stand upon his rights in the face of a king's desire; and we can almost infer from his reference to Jehovah (ver. 3), and from the ground of his refusal, that he was one of the seven thousand faithful ones, who had not bowed to Baal. **The inheritance of my fathers.** The law of Moses forbade the alienation of an estate from the family to which it belonged, so that every Israelite might have an interest in the land, and an attachment to it. **Turned away his face.** Instead of reclining on his couch toward the table, he turned away from it, in the ill-humor of a spoiled child. (2) *The king who cannot govern himself is not fit to govern others.*

5. Jezebel his wife. We see in this lesson all the force and energy of her nature, her absolute want of principle, her cruelty, and the universal fear which she inspired, none daring to withstand her will. Her influence for evil, reaching through generations, shows how great might have been her power for good.

6. I spake unto Naboth. He had proposed to make Naboth his accomplice in a violation of God's law, and was vexed, not merely at Naboth's independence, but more at his righteousness. (3) *A God-fearing man is a constant rebuke to the godless.*

7. Dost thou now govern? Jezebel felt a contempt for her weak husband, and coming from despotic Tyre she could not comprehend the constitutional government of Israel. Her words are an implied taunt: "Are you, or Naboth, the master of Israel?" **Let thine heart be merry.** "Do not give yourself any concern about the matter." **I will give thee.** "If you cannot obtain it, I can." She is equal to any emergency, and ready for any crime.

8. She wrote letters in Ahab's name. Though the king did not enter into the transaction, he tacitly gave his consent to it. (4) *Just so every man is responsible for all the evil done in his name, if he can prevent it and fails to do so.* **With his seal.** The seal is still used in the East more than the signature to authenticate documents. **Elders and . . . nobles.** The *rulers* were the representatives of the tribe-families having hereditary possessions in the place; *nobles* were leading men in social position.

9. Proclaim a fast. To atone for some imagined disgrace, and thus give the prosecution of Naboth a religious ground. (5) *In every age religion has been used as a cloak for crime.* **Set Naboth on high.** Not as if in honor, but in sight of all the people, to be tried for crime.

10. Two men. Two witnesses were necessary for conviction. **Sons of Belial.** Not a proper name, but a word signifying *worthlessness;* hence the expression is the Hebrew form for "worthless, wicked men." Such these false witnesses would need to be. **Thou didst blaspheme God.** Even an idolatrous people pretend to have some respect for the name of God. (6) *What, then, shall be said of profane swearers now?* **And the king.** To curse the king would be treason, and subject his property to forfeiture. **Carry him out.** Death was always inflicted outside the walls of the city. **Stone him.** The usual method of execution among the Israelites. The two witnesses were required to cast the first stones.

11. The men of his city. It shows the depth of natural depravity, when men in official station could be found to deal so unjustly and so cruelly with an innocent fellow-townsman. **Did as Jezebel had sent.** Every indication points to the absolute power which this wicked woman possessed in Israel. No hand was raised to protect Elijah from her hate (see Lesson VIII), and no elder ventured to forewarn Naboth of his danger. (7) *How much more noble is the Christian standard of obedience to God rather than men!*

12, 13. They proclaimed a fast. They entered heartily into the plot, as if accustomed to crimes like it. **There came in two men.** Satan is ready with his tools when they are needed by his workmen. **Sat before him.** They sat during the trial, and then stood up with their testimony. **Stoned him with stones.** From 2 Kings 9. 26, it is evident that his sons were put to death with him, as was common in Oriental countries.

14, 15. They sent to Jezebel. Having imbued their hands in blood at her command, they hasten to send her word, hoping to receive some reward. **Jezebel said to Ahab.** Her manner of receiving the news and of repeating it to Ahab shows a conscience utterly seared and past feeling.

16. Ahab rose up. His promptness to profit by a crime shows that he, too, was thoroughly unscrupulous. **To go down.** He went in state, in the royal chariot, and behind him rode the very man who in after years was the instrument of his punishment, Jehu the future king of Israel. 2 Kings 9. 25. (8) *So the sentence follows close upon the crime.*

17. The word of the Lord. It is needless to say that none can tell how the message came to the prophet. **Elijah the Tishbite.** He had not been seen for some time, and Ahab may have thought that he was dead. **The Tishbite** probably refers to the place of his birth, an unknown Tishbe in Gilead.

18. Which is in Samaria. This refers to Ahab's place of residence and seat of government, and does not mean that he was at that time in Samaria. **He is in the vineyard.** Naboth was dead, but his avenger

was living. (9) *God sees where every sinner is at any given moment.*

19. Hast thou killed. The words rebuke his indecent haste in seizing on the land on the very day of its owner's murder. **In the place.** There was a double fulfillment of this prophecy. Ahab's own blood was licked up by dogs, but at Samaria (1 Kings 22. 38); and the body of Ahab's son Jehoram was thrown, after his slaughter, upon the very place of Naboth's execution, and there left for the dogs to eat. Some commentators see in Naboth a type of Christ. 1.) Each was conspired against. 2.) Each shed his blood for his vineyard. 3.) Each was accused by two false witnesses. 4.) Each was charged with blasphemy against God and the king. 5.) Each was unjustly put to death. 6.) The murderers of each were condemned to destruction for their crime.

HOME READINGS.

M. The story of Naboth. 1 Kings 21. 4-19.
Tu. Judgment against Ahab deferred. 1 Kings 21. 20-29.
W. Ahab's death. 1 Kings 22. 14-40.
Th. The stoning of Stephen. Acts 7. 51-60.
F. The God of judgment. Psa. 9. 1-20.
S. Sold, soul and body. John 18. 1-14.
S. Fasting for conspiracy. Isa. 58. 1-7.

GOLDEN TEXT.

Thou hast sold thyself to work evil in the sight of the Lord. 1 Kings 21. 20.

LESSON HYMN. C. M.

Hymnal, No. 784.

Try us, O God, and search the ground
Of every sinful heart;
Whate'er of sin in us is found,
O bid it all depart.

If to the right or left we stray,
Leave us not comfortless;
But guide our feet into the way
Of everlasting peace.

Up into thee, our living Head,
Let us in all things grow,
Till thou hast made us free indeed,
And spotless here below.

TIME.—B. C. 900.
PLACE.—Jezreel, in the kingdom of Israel.
RULERS.—See Lesson IV.
CONNECTING LINKS.—1. Ben-hadad II., King of Damascus, with all the subject kings under him, made war on Ahab, but was twice defeated, and the second time might have been destroyed but for the unwise kindness of Ahab; 2. Ahab wished to buy a vineyard belonging to Naboth, but his offer was refused, and Jezebel, Ahab's queen, formed a plot to murder Naboth, that her husband might obtain the vineyard. Read 1 Kings 20 and 21.

DOCTRINAL SUGGESTION—Human depravity.

QUESTIONS FOR SENIOR STUDENTS.

1. Ahab's Greed, v. 4-6.
What did Ahab covet, and why?
When Naboth refused to sell, what did the king do?
What spirit did he manifest?

2. Jezebel's Guilt, v. 7-16.
What did Jezebel propose?
What plot did she weave?
How did a public fast serve her purpose?
Why was the charge of blasphemy made?
Who were the witnesses?
What was the result?

3. God's Justice, v. 17-19.
What did the Lord direct Elijah to do?
What was the prophet to say to the king?
What terrible punishment was predicted?

Practical Teachings.

Where in this lesson do we learn—

1. That excessive greed leads to murder?
2. That the wicked do impious acts under guise of piety?
3. That retribution is certain?

QUESTIONS FOR INTERMEDIATE SCHOLARS.

1. Ahab's Greed, v. 4-6.
Why was Ahab angry?
How did he show his anger?
Who questioned the king?
What was his reply?

2. Jezebel's Guilt, v. 7-16.
What advice did Jezebel give?
What promise did she make?
To whom were letters sent?
In what city did Naboth live? ver. 1.
What accusation was ordered to be made against him?
How were the queen's orders received?
Who was accused?
What false testimony was given?
What was the result of the trial?
What message was sent to Jezebel?
What advice did she give the king?
What became of Naboth's vineyard?

3. God's Justice, v. 17-19.
What divine command was given to Elijah?
What question was he to ask?
What was Ahab's punishment?

Teachings of the Lesson.

Where in this lesson are we taught—

1. The sinfulness of selfishness?
2. The cruelty of power in the hands of the wicked?
3. The sure retribution of divine justice?

QUESTIONS FOR YOUNGER SCHOLARS.

What was there near King Ahab's palace that he wanted very much for his own? **A vineyard belonging to Naboth.**

Why didn't he buy it if he was a rich king? **He did try to, but Naboth would not sell it.**

What did he do because he could not get it? **He went to bed and cried, and would not eat his supper.**

What did Jezebel tell him when she knew it? **That she would give it to him.**

How did she manage to get it? **She wrote to the rulers of the city.**

What did the letter say? **Take Naboth and get some men to swear they heard him curse God and the king.**

What were they to do next? **Take him out and stone him to death.**

Could she find any one wicked enough to do such a thing? **Yes; they did just as she said.**

As soon as Jezebel heard that Naboth was stoned, what did she tell Ahab? **"Arise, and take Naboth's vineyard: for he is dead!"**

As Ahab was walking up and down the vineyard who appeared to him? **Elijah.**

What did Elijah say to Ahab? **"The dogs shall lick your blood in the place they did Naboth's."**

How did Ahab die? **He was killed in battle.**

When the servants washed his chariot, what happened? **The wild dogs licked up his blood.**

Words with Little People.

God *teaches* us by *bad* examples as well as by good ones. Just over that fence, or the other side that store window, is something you want almost as much as Naboth wanted the vineyard. *This* side the fence and the window you are SAFE; on the *other* side, you have "sold yourself to work evil in the sight of the Lord," as surely as Ahab and Jezebel had. [Repeat the GOLDEN TEXT.] Remember, no one gets *sold* to sin *all at once:* they creep along to it by degrees. Watch and guard against the least *little* step toward it. Remember who is waiting to *help.*

THE LESSON CATECHISM.

[For the entire school.]

1. Why would Ahab eat no bread? **Because Naboth refused him his vineyard.**

2. What did Ahab's wicked wife, Jezebel, say to him? **"I will give thee the vineyard."**

3. To accomplish this object, what did she do? **Caused Naboth to be stoned to death.**

4. What did she then say to Ahab? **"Arise, take possession of the vineyard."**

5. What did God command Elijah to go and say to Ahab? **That dogs should lick his blood.**

TEXTS AT CHURCH.

Morning Text.....

Evening Text.....

ANALYTICAL AND BIBLICAL OUTLINE.

The Story of a Crime.

I. Covetousness.
1. *Heavy and displeased.* v. 4.
"No peace....to the wicked." Isa. 57. 21.
2. *Because....Naboth....not give....inheritance.* v. 4.
"Woe to him that coveteth." Hab. 2. 9.
3. *Would eat no bread.* v. 4.
"His days are sorrows, and his travail grief." Eccl. 2. 22.

II. Counsel.
1. *Jezebel....came to him.* v. 5.
"Take counsel....that they may add sin to sin." Isa. 30. 1.
2. *Why is thy spirit so sad?* v. 5.
"Pierced....through with many sorrows." 1 Tim. 6. 10.
3. *Dost thou now govern?* v. 7.
"Better....he that ruleth his spirit." Prov. 16. 32.
4. *Let thine heart be merry.* v. 7.
"Take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry." Luke 12. 19.
5. *I will give thee the vineyard.* v. 7.
"Covet fields, and take them by violence." Micah 2. 2.

III. Conspiracy.
1. *Wrote letters....to the nobles.* v. 8.
"Wicked plotteth against the just." Psa. 37. 12.
2. *Proclaim a fast.* v. 9.
"A cloak of maliciousness." 1 Pet. 2. 16.
3. *Set Naboth on high.* v. 9.
"Conspired against him to slay him." Gen. 37. 18.
4. *Set two men....to witness.* v. 10.
"Such as breathe out cruelty." Psa. 27. 12.
5. *Stone him that he may die.* v. 10.
"Make haste to shed innocent blood." Isa. 59. 7.

IV. Crime.
1. *Nobles did....as Jezebel had sent.* v. 11.
"No fear of God before their eyes." Rom. 3. 18.
2. *Men of Belial witnessed.* v. 13.
"He that speaketh lies shall perish." Prov. 19. 9.
3. *Naboth did blaspheme.* v. 13.
"Laid to my charge things that I knew not." Psa. 35. 11.
4. *Carried him forth....and stoned him.* v. 13.
"Woe to the bloody city!" Ezek. 24. 9.

V. Condemnation.
1. *Thus saith the Lord.* v. 19.
"Provoked the Holy One." Isa. 1. 4.
2. *Where dogs licked the blood.* v. 19.
"Cast him into the plat." 2 Kings 9. 26.
3. *Shall dogs lick thy blood.* v. 19.
"The dogs licked up his blood." 1 Kings 22. 38.

ADDITIONAL PRACTICAL LESSONS.

Thoughts on Naboth's Vineyard.

1. How much of evil and trouble comes from worldly possessions! Naboth's vineyard cost its owner a dear price.

2. How much harm comes from looking with covetous desire upon the things of others!

3. A sin, though done for fear or for favor, is none the less a sin.

4. We may sin by proxy, but we must suffer in person.

5. Not even a king has power to make wrong right, or good evil.

6. He who sells himself to work evil gets a small price for his pains.

English Teacher's Notes.

There is no human being we feel more inclined to pity than a slave, one who is considered the property of another, and whose time, and strength, and talents, and energies, are absolutely at that other's disposal. To put an end to slavery among her people, America laid down the lives of thousands of her brave sons. For the same cause England has given freely of her gold, and to this day her vessels watch for the slave dhows on the East African coast, and rescue many of the unfortunate beings who have been stolen from their homes and destined to pass their lives in bondage. To be sold as a slave is to descend to a condition of the utmost degradation, of misery, and of hopelessness. A slave is of no account in the world; his feelings, his wishes, his opinions, go for nothing. A slave must work for his master, and work without payment. A slave must suffer whatever his master chooses to put upon him; he has no redress. If such a one had a chance to regain his freedom, would he not seize it eagerly? What then should we think of a man who would sell himself into slavery—who would of his own choice give up his freedom, and become the property of another! Such a man could not even enjoy the price paid him for his voluntary surrender: once a slave, all that he possessed must be at his master's disposal.

Yet we read to-day of one who sold himself, and sold himself to a definite work under a hard taskmaster.

Who is this poor slave? It is Ahab, king of Israel. A king a slave! One would have thought that he who ruled others must himself be free. But we shall see that he was not. He had much to make life pleasant to him. He had great opportunities for usefulness. God had been very merciful to him, first in sending rain upon the land, and giving him room to repent of his misdeeds, as well as a prophet at his side to help and guide him; and secondly, in delivering him and his country from the Syrians. Chap. 20. But he has used none of his opportunities; he is not even enjoying his beautiful palace and gardens at Jezreel. Though he has the name and state of a king, he is actually a poor slave.

Look at this poor slave at work. Ver. 4. There he lies, moody and miserable, refusing even to eat, because he cannot have Naboth's vineyard. But some will say this is not work. Not work with the hands, certainly, and not work in the sense of profitable labor. But it is work, or, rather, hard toil. His mind has no rest. It is a prey to discontent. It is desiring, and coveting, and brooding over its disappointment. The ceaseless working, thinking, wishing, regretting, worrying, of the mind is far harder toil than that of the laborer in the fields or the blacksmith at the forge. And Ahab gets weary and warm with this fretting, useless labor.

But see him working in another way. There is a solemn assembly at Samaria. A man is brought forth to be tried for blasphemy. Witnesses come forward and swear that he is guilty. And yet all this is a mere mockery. The judges very well know that Naboth is innocent, and that the witnesses are liars. Why then does the innocent suffer the terrible punishment of blasphemy? Be-

cause they have the king's command for it—letters written in Ahab's name and signed with Ahab's seal. It is the deed of Ahab, though he himself neither planned nor enjoined it. He is the working instrument made use of to commit this horrible crime. It is plain enough now.

Who is this poor slave's master? The Lord Jesus has told us: "Whosoever committeth sin is the servant (that is, slave) of sin." John 8. 34. Ahab has sold himself to this master—a master who will leave him no rest, and the task to which he is set is "to work evil."

But what did Ahab get for all this? A slave-master, it is true, gives no wages, but he pays a price for his slave.

What price did this poor slave get for the sale of himself? His wife's approval was certainly part of it. It was at her instigation that his greatest acts of idolatry and his worst crimes were committed. Ver. 25. But he cannot have got a full share even of this. There is a certain contempt in the way Jezebel speaks to him: "Dost thou now govern the kingdom of Israel? . . . let thine heart be merry: I will give thee the vineyard," etc. But the desired vineyard—that he did get. Yes, and what was the first thing he met there? Not pleasure and satisfaction, but an enemy, a rebuke, a fearful prospect. The desired thing turns to a curse. He is brought face to face with the consequences of his sin—vengeance is waiting him. This is the price he gets!

Was Ahab the only slave who ever sold himself? He is but one among thousands! Of how many among ourselves are the words true, "servants of sin!" Rom. 6. 16-20. A. is discontented, full of envious thoughts, fretting secretly because others are richer or more admired than herself, so full of her wants and wrongs and disappointments that she can hardly find time to fulfill her daily duties or to enjoy any thing at all. B. is spending her money on dress, and every spare hour in gaiety—no quietness, no leisure, but life a perpetual whirl. C. is stifling his conscience and taking up evil ways. All going the same way as Ahab, selling themselves, poor, hard-worked slaves! And what is the price? Often and often the approval of some companion. But whatever it be, the price, if they get it, is certain to be like Ahab's: it will turn to a curse, "The wages of sin is death."

But One has come to redeem the slaves of sin. The Lord Jesus is the great Liberator. He has paid a heavier price than either England or America for the liberty of the slave. There is not one but may claim freedom through him. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."

Bible Reading Lesson Analysis.

The Story of Naboth. 1 Kings 21. 4-19.

1. To covet, in the bad sense, is to inordinately desire the possessions of another, ver. 4. God forbids it: "Thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife....nor any thing that is thy neighbor's." Exod. 20. 17; 1 Tim. 6. 9; Ezek. 22. 12; Psa. 10. 3; Jer. 6. 13.

2. It was Ahab's self-will that made him unhappy when very admissibly refused a request, ver. 4. "Lift not up your horn on high; speak not with a stiff neck." Psa. 75. 5; Heb. 13. 5; Luke 3. 14; Isa. 5. 8; 1 Tim. 6. 6.

3. The contented man is the king. Personal peace is imperial. Self-mastery is real dominion, ver. 4. "But godliness with contentment is great gain." 1 Tim. 6. 6; Psa. 73. 25; 146. 5; Esth. 5. 13; Phil. 4. 11, 12.

4. These words of Jezebel were tender, but her spirit was always terrible, ver. 5. "For it was so, when Jezebel cut off the prophets of the Lord." 1 Kings 18. 4; Mal. 14. 3-8; 2 Kings 9. 30-37; Rev. 2. 20.

5. Rousing himself out of the insanity of such discontentment, Ahab, when thus addressed by his wicked wife (vers. 5-7), should have replied, "Get thee hence, Satan; for it is written, Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve." Matt. 4. 10; Prov. 16. 12; 25. 2; 28. 16; 29. 12; 31. 5.

6. The bad woman made the bad queen. Character is character irrespective of position, ver. 7. "Did not Solomon, king of Israel, sin? Even him did outlandish women cause to sin." Neh. 13. 26; Num. 31. 15, 16; Isa. 3. 12; Gen. 3. 6, 11, 12; Eccl. 7. 26.

7. The proclamation of a fast under these circumstances was profanation, ver. 9. "Sanctify ye a fast, call a solemn assembly, gather the elders, and all the inhabitants of the land into the house of the Lord your God, and cry unto your God." Joel 1. 14; Isa. 58. 6, 7; 1 Sam. 7. 6; 2 Sam. 12. 16; 2 Chron. 20. 3.

8. God is on the side of fairness. The God of the old Bible was always just. He hated then, and now hates, iniquity. Read, and see how you will instinctively approve, his views on the subject of perjury, ver. 10. "And ye shall not swear by name falsely." Lev. 19. 12; Zech. 8. 17; Psa. 24. 4, 5; Deut. 19. 16, 18; 1 Sam. 19. 6, 10.

9. Some points of Jewish law and practice illustrated in the directions given by this infernal queen, ver. 10. "At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death." Deut. 17. 6; Lev. 24. 14, 16; Acts 7. 58; Luke 4. 29; 2 Kings 9. 26.

10. Five of God's commands were deliberately broken in this plot against Naboth, ver. 11. "Cursed be he that confirmeth not all the words of this law to do them." Deut. 11. 1; Lev. 19. 18; Deut. 5. 17, 19, 20.

11. God suffered this awful crime to be committed, but he was not unmindful of it, ver. 17. "When he maketh inquisition for blood, he remembereth them; he forgetteth not the cry of the humble." Psa. 9. 12; Zeph. 1. 14-18; Isa. 48. 9; Jer. 36. 31; Lev. 26. 18.

12. Elijah illustrated the fearless fidelity of a prophet of God, ver. 20. "And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee, and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house." Ezek. 2. 6; 1 Sam. 15; Deut. 18. 20; 2 Sam. 12; 2 Chron. 15.

13. Some modifications of this severe prediction owing to Ahab's repentance, vers. 27-29. 2 Kings 9. 30-35; 1 Kings 22. 34-38.

Lessons:

1. Covetousness is a possible, but not a frequent, sin, vers. 4-6.

2. The desire to secure possessions like those of our neighbor is often called covetousness, but instead of that may be worthy aspiration.

3. It is folly to become impatient when your will is frustrated. Even God is not allowed to have his own way in his own world. Kings have no right, and no law, to make some demands, ver. 4.

4. The spirit of Jezebel was infernal. She felt at home in hell as soon as she got there. Nothing more infamous ever occurred, vers. 5-16.

5. The nature of this queen was extraordinary in its resources of evil. In her conduct she was herself, that explains all. For Ahab with such a wife I entertain a grain of pity.

6. Men can be hired, patronized, frightened, to do any deed of darkness and danger. It is as easy to get men to work in a powder-mill as a green-house. Wages are practically omnipotent, vers. 13, 14.

7. God in the midst of sin is not inattentive to its alarming manifestations. His word, as prophet, is always on hand to warn men of danger and mention a way of escape.

Lesson Word-Pictures.

How choice is the vineyard of Naboth! How delectable are its purple clusters in vintage-time! How favored its location, so near the king's premises! Naboth does not forget these facts. He walks the vineyard in pride. Is he aware also that outside of his vineyard is an evil eye, a covetous eye, a cruel eye? Does Naboth see it, that eye of Ahab looking toward his vineyard? "Come, Naboth, sell thy vineyard!" "No, Ahab." And now, like a petted child crossed in his whims, Ahab lies down on his bed, turns his face to the wall, and will not eat his dinner! What dark face, harder, more brazen than Ahab's, is bending over this sulky king? It is the face of Jezebel, and she pets him and cheers him and says, "Naboth's vineyard shall be yours." She is writing letters now and uses the seal of Ahab. It is all about Naboth. When Jezebel turns letter-writer, owners of vineyards may well tremble. She has told her willing tools what to do to Naboth, and they do it. They have proclaimed a fast. Naboth, they "set on high among the people." They hire two perjurers who charge upon Naboth blasphemy of his God and king. What a tumult now! It is a mob without heart that rushes upon Naboth. He is hustled out of the city, and then all about him they make a circle that is a death-line. The cruel stones fly at him, faster, heavier, and when night comes, there is no living owner of the vineyard "hard by the palace of Ahab." The dead Naboth weltering in his blood lies outside the gates and the hungry dogs from the city are about him. It is an hour when the royal thief goes down to his new vineyard. Perhaps he looks at the thrifty vines and says, "Mine," or at the stretching, sunny slopes, and says, "Mine." Is he rubbing his hands and chuckling over his good luck? He starts back. Has he stepped on a snake? No, but that man over there, in a prophet's garb, who sternly eyes the king, what does he want? Ahab may have thought he was hiding away in a cave in some wilderness, and here he is to say a word for the dead Naboth! How did Elijah know? "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" asks Ahab. Yes, he has found the royal culprit, and in words that sink into Ahab's soul like an iron brand red-hot into the flesh he tells him that dogs shall lick his blood even as they licked Naboth's and in the same place.

Blackboard.

BY J. B. PHIPPS, ESQ.

The diagram explains itself. Ahab and Jezebel are yoked together to work all manner of evil. Satan here united his forces, and they marched rapidly down the road of Covetousness, past the hill of Evil Counsel, through the short and bloody lane of Murder, to the vineyard of Naboth. Let some scholar finish the story, and tell of the swift steps of pursuing justice.

Berean Methods.

Hints for the Teachers' Meeting and the Class.

A plan for teaching this lesson would be, to begin by drawing a diagram to represent an imaginary vineyard, not Naboth's vineyard, but *Ahab's heart;* hence draw it in the form of a large heart ...Now, what were the vines growing in this vineyard? Write the name of each as it is shown in the lesson, while the story is told.... 1. *Covetousness*—explain what it is, a desire for the possessions of others. 2. *Discontent.* 3. *Conspiracy*—in which Ahab was as guilty as his queen. 4. *Falsehood*—since the charge was a lying one. 5. *Hypocrisy*—since it was in the sacred name of religion. 6. *Robbery*—for it was to obtain the possessions of another. 7. *Murder*—for it ended in his judicial slaughter.... Show the result of the crime in Ahab's sentence. ILLUSTRATION. A duke of Austria once hired some men to murder an enemy, and then paid them in counterfeit coin, saying, "False money is good enough for false knaves." So Ahab was paid when he sold himself to work evil.

References. FREEMAN. Ver. 8: Seals, 323. Ver. 13: Executions outside the walls, 727.

Primary and Intermediate.

LESSON THOUGHT. *How Sin Grows.* Interest children at the outset of this lesson in talking about Ahab. Who was he? To whom did Israel belong? How ought the king of Israel to have ruled his people? Show that as God is the King of all nations, only that kingdom can prosper which owns him as God. Call from children events in Ahab's life which show that he had turned away from the Lord, and tell that the lesson shows to what this leads.

1. Put lesson-symbol on the board, or, still better, show a bunch of grapes. Question something in this way: Upon what did these grow? Did they look like this last spring? Why not? What have they done since they were just little specks? What was there before the grapes could be seen at all? Would there have been any blossoms if there had been no vine. So make the thought of *gradual growth* clear, and teach that no great wrong-doing springs up all at once. These are first little ways in which we step aside from the right path. The boy who keeps a penny that belong to another is in danger of becoming a thief, etc., etc.

2. What commandment did Ahab break in worshiping idols? When we break one commandment it becomes easy to break another. Tell the story of Ahab's desire to have Naboth's vineyard, and ask what command Ahab broke in wanting this. Tell of his childish grief because Naboth refused to sell the vineyard, and Queen Jezebel's plan for relief. Show that although it was Jezebel who planned the falsehood and the murder, Ahab was responsible for it, for he allowed her to do it. It is as bad to consent to wrong-doing as to do wrong.

3. Show that when we have gained some coveted pleasure by wrong means, God does not leave us to enjoy it. Tell how the prophet Elijah went to meet Ahab, as he was on his way to take possession of the vineyard, and told him of God's anger and the punishment that would overtake him. Ask if God notices the acts of children as well as the acts of kings? Show a tiny flower, and tell the children that it is just as perfect in all its parts as is the great oak-tree. Nothing is little in God's sight. Warn against what may seem little sins, deceit, petty thefts, indulgence of temper, etc., since these things are sure to grow, and no one can tell to what great crimes they may lead.

LESSONS FOR SEPTEMBER, 1885.

SEPT. 6. Elijah Translated. 2 Kings 2. 1–15.
SEPT. 13. The Shunammite's Son. 2 Kings 4. 18–37.
SEPT. 20. Naaman the Syrian. 2 Kings 5. 1–16.
SEPT. 27. Third Quarterly Review.

Book Notice.

Rob Claxton's Story. By Parthene B. Chamberlain. New York: T. Y. Crowell & Co. This story opens with the departure of Captain Claxton, Rob's father, for the war in behalf of the Union. His son has promised to keep a journal, honestly recording his conduct and the incidents of family life. This journal occupies about half the book, and is just such a story as a thorough boy, who has in him the stuff for a man, would write. After his father's return home, wounded, the story is continued, but not in the form of a diary, and Rob is brought up to a good, worthy manhood. We can recommend this book as good for Sunday-school libraries.

CLASS RECORD FOR AUGUST, 1885.

	Aug. 2.	Aug. 9.	Aug. 16.	Aug. 23.	Aug. 30.
Weather.....					
Teacher.					
PUPILS.					

Whisper Songs for August.

(Tune, "Hold the Fort.")

FIFTH LESSON.

Look, O children, sin and Satan
Seek to win the day!
Help alone is found in Jesus,
Call without delay.—*Cho.*

SIXTH LESSON.

Choose King Jesus, choose him early,
Make his paths your choice;
Jesus loves to save the children,
Listen to his voice.—*Cho.*

SEVENTH LESSON.

Jesus, mighty God of heaven,
Hear the prayer we make;
Keep us from the power of Satan,
Save us for thy sake.—*Cho.*

EIGHTH LESSON.

Jesus, in the hour of trial,
Comes to help his own;
We will watch and listen always,
For his voice alone.—*Cho.*

NINTH LESSON.

Jesus, keep thy child from doing
Evil in thy sight,
For thy holy eye is piercing
As the morning light.—*Cho.*

LESSONS FOR 1885.

Third Quarter.

July 5. Revolt of the Ten Tribes.1 Kings 12. 6–17.
12. Idolatry Established.....1 Kings 12. 25–33.
19. Omri and Ahab.....1 Kings 16. 23–34.
26. Elijah the Tishbite.....1 Kings 17. 1–15.
Aug. 2. **Elijah Meeting Ahab**.....1 Kings 18. 1–18.
9. **The Prophets of Baal**.....1 Kings 18. 19–29.
Aug. 16. **The Prophet of the Lord**..1 Kings 18. 30–46.
23. **Elijah at Horeb**.....1 Kings 19. 1–18.
30. **The Story of Naboth**.....1 Kings 21. 4–19.
Sept. 6. Elijah Translated.....2 Kings 2. 1–15.
13. The Shunammite's Son....2 Kings 4. 18–37.
20. Naaman the Syrian.....2 Kings 5. 1–16.
27. Third Quarterly Review.

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